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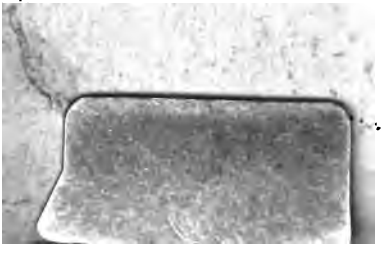
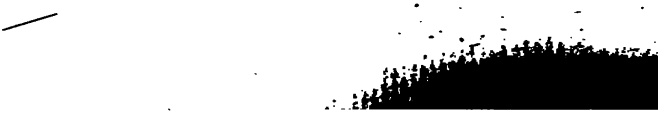


CAROLINE

OF

LICHTFIELD.



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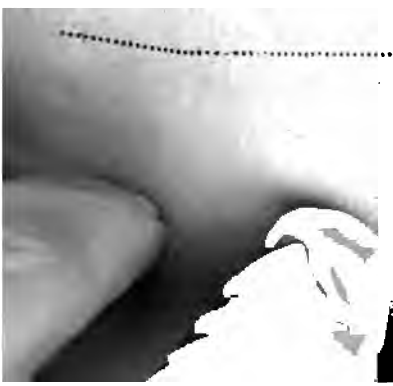

CAROLINE

OF

LICHTFIELD;

A NOVEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

BY THOMAS HOLCROFT.

Idole d'un cœur juſte, & paſſion du Sage,
Amitié, que ton nom ſoutienne cet ouvrage;
Règne dans mes écrits, ainſi que dans mon cœur,
Tu m'appris à connoître, à ſentir, le bonheur.

VOLTAIRE.

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CAROLINE

OF

LICHTFIELD.

THESE two letters being ſent, and thus being more tranquil, relative to the fate of Matilda, the Count applied himſelf wholly to the plan he had formed, in order to aſcertain the happineſs of Caroline. He had deſired the High Cham-

berlain to come to Ronebourg, ſo ſoon as his daughter ſhould be informed of the death of the Baroneſs. It could not be long before Lindorf muſt arrive, and the Count was determined to ſet off for Berlin the moment he came; pretending to have received an order from the King, and to leave Lindorf at Ronebourg, with the High Chamberlain, that he might obtain a divorce from his Majeſty, and his conſent, alſo, for the marriage of Lindorf and Caroline. He then intended to write and inform them of their happineſs; and, without ſeeing them, to depart for Dreſden. From Dreſden, he meant to go to England with Matilda; or without her, if ſhe determined to marry the young Baron de Zaſtrow; and to reſide there with his mother's relations. He felt ſufficient fortitude to make Caroline and his friend

happy, but not to be a daily witneſs of their loves; and this plan, once fixed, he held to be unalterable.

Alas! he knew not yet all the power of love; had yet not felt all its vengeful effects. The more he ſtruggled with paſſion the deeper was it rooted in his heart. How often, when beſide Caroline, unable to reſtrain his feelings, was he ready to kneel at her feet, confeſs his affection, his internal ſtruggles, his deſpair; appeal to her generoſity, recall to mind the ſacred bond by which they were united, the vows they had mutually made, and employ every reſource, of pity and of paſſion, in ſupplicating her conſent to live and die with the huſband by whom ſhe was adored. By flight only could he obtain a victory over himſelf, on theſe occaſions. Once

out of her ſight, and virtue, delicacy, and friendſhip, again were aſcendant. Love ceded to duty; and he had the fortitude to imagine Caroline in the arms of another, and not expire at the thought! Then would he remember Lindorf, baniſhed from his country, dragging an unhappy being through foreign climates, deprived of his miſtreſs and his friend, without conſolation and without hope; and, remembering, ſhudder and deteſt his weakneſs: again renew his oaths to ſubdue it, and, fearing to expoſe himſelf to future dangers, deprive himſelf of the pleaſure of ſeeing Caroline; who, ill interpreting the cauſe of his abſence, would, on her part, weep and afflict herſelf at conduct which ſhe ſuppoſed to be the moſt unequivocal proof of indifference.

In

In her moments of vexation and deſpair, ſhe ſtrengthened herſelf in the reſolution of returning to Rindaw, and of entreating, nay, of abſolutely requiring his conſent, ſhould he offer any oppoſition. "Alas!" would ſhe reply to this doubt, "far from oppoſing, he will gladly ſeize the means of living ſeparate from Caroline.—Separate!—What! am I no more to ſee him, to hear him no more? And, when I quit this place, muſt a laſting ſeparation enſue? And muſt I aſk it; muſt I myſelf pronounce the fatal ſentence? No! never ſhall I acquire force adequate to a taſk like this! When he ſhall have the cruelty to command, ſubmiſſion will ſurely be ſufficient puniſhment."

Yet did her friendſhip for the Baroneſs, at ſome moments, make her even deſire this

ſeparation, and vanquiſh her fears of quitting Walſtein. The High Chamberlain, as had been concerted with the Count, endeavoured to prepare her to ſupport the death of her friend. In his firſt letters, he ſpoke of remedies ſhe had taken, to recover her ſight, which were powerful and ſomewhat dangerous. He afterwards wrote word her blindneſs was paſt cure, and that it afflicted her ſo much ſhe had fallen ill. Caroline no ſooner heard this than ſhe wiſhed to fly to attend and conſole her; but ſhe herſelf was yet too feeble for the fatigues of ſuch a journey. She wrote the moſt affecting letters, both to her friend and her father; and, every returning courier, hoped to hear of her recovery. At length the letters of the High Chamberlain became ſo alarming, and affirmed ſo poſitively

tively the Baroneſs of Rindaw was in the utmoſt danger, that Caroline immediately determined to ſet off; and ſent to beg the Count would come and ſpeak with her.

He found her with her eyes ſwimming in tears, and well divined their cauſe.—"O! Sir," ſaid ſhe, the moment he entered, "read here what my father has written! My dear Mamma is very, very ill; nay, perhaps worſe than he ſays. Let me intreat you to give immediate orders for my departure; for I will inſtantly be gone to Rindaw. Never ſhall I forgive myſelf for having delayed ſo long. Should I be too late, ſhould I never more behold the tendereſt, deareſt of friends——"

The Count, finding this idea had preſented itſelf to her mind, and that the

apprehenſion had had half its effect, thought this the time to inform her of the truth: beſide that her reſolution to depart immediately, made ſecreſy any longer impoſſible.——"Dear Caroline," ſaid he, ſeating himſelf beſide her, and taking one of her hands, "let me intreat you, in the name of Heaven, to be calm; think of the injury you may do yourſelf! Scarcely recovered from a moſt dangerous illneſs, can you ſuſtain——"

"Yes any thing, every thing! It is my duty to devote my returning ſtrength to the ſervice of the friend who has been, to me, the beſt and tendereſt of mothers. I feel how much I have neglected this duty, and ſhall, indeed, be moſt happy, may I but have the means to repair my wrongs."

She

She was going to riſe and make preparations, but the Count again detained her. "A moment, dear Caroline, be appeaſed for a moment, I conjure you, and liſten to me——I have alſo received a letter from your father."

"Merciful God!" cried ſhe, turning pale, and preſaging what was coming; "a letter to you! Tell me! I beg you, inſtantly, tell me its contents. Has my father concealed any thing?—Oh! Sir,—" Her oppreſſed heart could no longer reſiſt the violence of agitation, and her ſobs interrupted ſpeech. The ſilence of the Count, his downcaſt eyes, the timid compaſſion of his countenance, and the vague anſwers he returned, confirmed her fears, and her deſpair became exceſſive. "Oh God! Oh God!" exclaimed ſhe, "I perceive, I

perceive I no longer have a friend, no longer have any thing in this world! My dear Mamma no longer exiſts, and I have loſt my all!"

"Not ſo, dear Caroline; there ſtill is a friend in the world, who hopes to prove how dear you are to him, and how much he is intereſted in your happineſs."

Caroline loved this friend too well herſelf to be wholly inſenſible of that conſolation he wiſhed to impart; and to thoſe new proofs of tenderneſs which ſhe no longer had dared to hope. Her tears ſtill flowed, abundantly flowed, but leſs bitterly. In the aſſaults of violent grief, the feeling and impaſſioned mind experiences relief by the company of a beloved object, and in the alleviations of love. She grieved, but the Count grieved with her, felt as ſhe felt,

and

and partook of her affliction. In theſe their moments of melancholy, their ſouls were in uniſon. Caroline had loſt the tendereſt of friends, but the very moment in which ſhe was informed of this misfortune was that which gave her the ſweet hope of being beloved, by the huſband ſhe adored; for, in this firſt tranſport of deſpair, which ſoftened fortitude and ſhewed Caroline ſtill more lovely, the Count was not able wholly to repreſs his paſſion. The ſorrow of Caroline demanded every care and conſolation friendſhip could afford; and Walſtein, while he endeavoured to aſſume the form of friendſhip, had all the tendereſt actions and looks of love. Caroline, thus, in the midſt of affliction, had a glimpſe of a happy futurity, and mourned that her friend was not to be a witneſs of her bliſs.

She deſired to be informed, circumſtantially, of her illneſs and death; but the Count, who underſtood nothing ſo ill as diſſimulation, referred her to the High Chamberlain, who would ſoon return; yet, to quiet her remorſe for having too long delayed going to the aid of her friend, he told her ſhe had died ſome time ſince, and when it was impoſſible for Caroline to have gone to her aſſiſtance. No ſooner was the High Chamberlain informed that his daughter knew the truth than he returned to Ronebourg, and told her, himſelf, ſhe was left ſole heireſs to the Canoneſs. She had made her will anew, after ſhe had been informed of her marriage, and it was to the Counteſs of Walſtein ſhe had bequeathed all her poſſeſſions: ſhe had indeed left a legacy to the Count, purpoſely, as ſhe herſelf had word-

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ed it, to prove how highly ſhe was ſatisfied at his union with Caroline. She recommended, in moſt affecting terms, the happineſs of this her beloved pupil, to Walſtein; and to Caroline that of the beſt and moſt ſublime of men.

The reading of the will drew many tears from Caroline; nor was the Count leſs affected. The High Chamberlain, alone, read it with perfect ſatisfaction, and comprehended not how an augmentation of fortune could become the ſubject of ſorrow. Caroline, alas! found only new motives, in theſe benefactions, to regret a friend ſo tender and ſo generous. Walſtein, diſtracted by a thouſand contrary ſenſations, could not hear of union and happineſs, which he ſo ſoon was to renounce, without extreme emotion. When the Baron came

to

to that article, he ſuddenly kneeled to Caroline; "yes," ſaid he, with vehement tranſport, "yes, by honour, by love, by every thing ſacred I ſwear, you ſhall be happy, Caroline."—He could not continue; and Caroline, affected to exceſs, tenderly ſtretched out her hand to raiſe him, while ſhe felt, more powerfully than ever, that on him, only, of all the world, this her promiſed happineſs depended, and on the ſentiments he ſhould entertain for her.

Had they been alone, perhaps, ſhe might then have told him what hers really were; perhaps this might have been the happy moment of an explanation too long delayed; but the preſence of the placid High Chamberlain checked ſuch effuſions of the heart. He, with wonderful tranquillity, continued to read the will; which contain-

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ed nothing farther, except legacies to ſervants and vaſſals. The Count, unable to ſupport the continuance of his preſent emotion and the tears of the compaſſionate Caroline, left the room and walked into the park, whither all his feelings went with him. He began no longer to underſtand his own proceedings; and, ſometimes, aſked himſelf wherefore he thus ſhould wilfully be for ever miſerable. Wherefore ſhould he yield the poſſeſſion of her on whom he had ſo many claims, and without whom it was impoſſible to live? "She begins," thought he, "to be accuſtomed to me; nay I even think I behold expreſſions of affection in her eyes. Alas! I know it can be but friendſhip, eſteem, gratitude; yet may not theſe ſenſations, in a mind like hers, well ſupply the place of love? Or may I ever hope to inſpire others? Does ſhe not already grant

more

more than I could ever expect? But, while I know, paſt doubt, her heart wholly appertains to another, to Lindorf!—Lindorf? Alas! perhaps he no longer is in exiſtence; perhaps he has fallen a victim to a paſſion the effects of which I have every cauſe to fear; perhaps he has ſunk under his grief, under the grief of Caroline, by which my own heart has been ſo often wounded, and which muſt be renewed, with ſuch exceſs, ſhould ſhe hear tidings ſo fatal!

The Count ſhuddered while he imagined he himſelf might be the meſſenger to inform Caroline of the death of the man ſhe loved; that he himſelf muſt then be conſidered as the cauſe of his death. The ſilence of Lindorf, after the ſhort letter he could not but have received, appeared to him a certain proof his fears were but too well

founded;

founded; and ſo much did this and ſuch like fears torment him that ſcarcely could reaſon ſuſtain the conflicts of the heart. At one moment he would paſſionately wiſh the return of Lindorf, and dread it worſe than death the next; equally fearing to ſee him arrive or to hear he was no longer in exiſtence. Thus did a man ſo philoſophic, ſo ſage, ſo wholly, till then, maſter of himſelf, at length, feel the empire of paſſion and its tyrannic power; and, while thus he felt, terrified at its effects, again he ſwore to vanquiſh it, to devote himſelf, if it were not too late, to the felicity of thoſe he loved.

From one of theſe tormenting terrors he was, at laſt, relieved. He received a letter from Varner, the valet de chambre of Lindorf, to whom he had given his ſhort

and

and preſſing letter, written to conjure his friend to return. " The good Varner en-
" treated his Excellency not to be uneaſy
" at not having yet received an anſwer to
" this letter, for that, when he came to
" Hamburg, his maſter was not there; he
" had embarked, a few days before, for
" England, with a Saxon gentleman; and
" he, Varner, detained three weeks at
" Hamburg by contrary winds, had neither
" been able to join his maſter, who ex-
" pected him at London, nor, conſequent-
" ly, to remit him the letter his Excellen-
" cy had confided to his care."

The firſt pleaſure of the Count was to learn that Lindorf ſtill lived, and, by being able to travel, was in good health. Nor was this pleaſure ſingle; Lindorf had not received his letter, his return was there-

fore

fore deferred, and this ſhort delay, which likewiſe deferred the moment when Walſtein ſhould be obliged to quit Caroline, cede her to another, and live for ever from her, was to him an age of happineſs. He haſtened therefore to her chamber, that he might not loſe moments ſo precious. Her father was with her. "My dear Count," ſaid the High Chamberlain, as Walſtein entered, "my daughter, here, is exceedingly deſirous of quitting Ronebourg, but dares not ſpeak to you on the ſubject. For my part, I can ſee no reaſon in the world why you ſhould remain longer here; for, at preſent, the Counteſs is ſufficiently recovered to undertake the journey. The King may complain of your long abſence; he commanded me to haſten your return to Berlin, and in a tone that will not admit of longer delay. I muſt certainly be gone;

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for my preſence is abſolutely neceſſary at court. If, therefore, your Excellency ſhall think proper to give orders, we will incontinently depart together."

The Count made no reply, but fixed his eyes on Caroline, in order to inquire of her countenance what was paſſing in her heart, and whether ſhe really wiſhed to leave Ronebourg. Caroline bluſhed, looked down, and, by her ſilence, ſeemed to approve. Yet was the embarraſſment of the Count beyond deſcription great. He could not be ignorant how much the King deſired his return; for, ſince his arrival from Ruſſia, he had only remained four and twenty hours at Berlin; and had had but one ſhort interview with his Majeſty. To the friendſhip of the Sovereign, only, was he indebted for his preſent long abſence; and frequent couriers brought him preſ-

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ſing letters from the King; or rather from a man who reclaimed his friend. Walſtein knew, likewiſe, that his marriage with Caroline was then become public. The High Chamberlain, who ſo long had laboured with this ſecret, had told it the whole world, as ſoon as his daughter was gone to Ronebourg. The King himſelf, knowing the Count and Counteſs were together, had openly ſpoken of their union; wherefore longer myſtery was impoſſible. Yet how might the Count, with his preſent intentions, take Caroline to Berlin as the Counteſs of Walſtein, and there preſent her at court, and to every body, by a name ſhe ſo ſoon was to quit?

He then felt how much the delay of his letter to Lindorf deranged all his projects. He no longer could refuſe the requeſt of the King, which might every moment be changed

changed to a command; he could not think of leaving Caroline, alone, at Ronebourg; and ſtill leſs of taking her to Rindaw, where every thing muſt tend to nouriſh and increaſe affliction. While reflecting, in this dilemma, how he muſt act, Caroline, preſſed by her father to confirm her deſire to depart immediately, ſaid, "ſhe ſhould, with pleaſure, accompany my Lord the Count to Berlin; but that ſhe hoped both he and the King would have the goodneſs, for ſome time, to diſpenſe with her ſeeing company; and that, while ſhe remained in mourning, ſhe might be permitted to live retired."

Walſtein eagerly caught the idea; and the health of Caroline, not yet ſufficiently re-eſtabliſhed, together with her deep mourning for a friend whom ſhe had loved

as

as a mother, were, in reality, excellent pretexts for complying with her requeſt, and neither receiving nor paying viſits, at Berlin, for ſome months. In leſs time than that Walſtein well might hope his future fate would be decided. Caroline, mean while, would live almoſt unknown, at Walſtein-houſe, where ſhe would ſee only her father, and himſelf; which, to him, was a moſt pleaſing reflection. It was ſome alleviation to deſpair not to be obliged to quit her before the dreaded hour of final ſeparation ſhould arrive. The ſage in love is but a man. The Count no longer ſaw impediments. Caroline living in his houſe, and in his ſight, was perfection of bliſs; and, though he ſtill deſtined her for a man he ſuppoſed ſhe loved, though ſtill determined carefully to conceal his own paſſion, he could

not

not refuſe himſelf this intermediate enjoyment of happineſs; which, beſide, would remove every difficulty, relative to where Caroline ſhould remain.

The day of departure was, therefore, fixed; and the tender Caroline beheld it arrive with rapture. She ſhould no longer live in the manſion of Lindorf: it was now determined ſhe ſhould for ever paſs her life with the huſband ſhe adored: and ſhe thought herſelf certain of ſoon effacing from his memory, by offices of tender affection, the capricious and erroneous conduct which her heart, at preſent, diſclaimed; and which ſhe herſelf could never pardon. Walſtein, attentive to every action and look of Caroline, perceived ſhe went with pleaſure; but this pleaſure he aſcribed to virtue, and to the deſire ſhe

had, henceforth, of avoiding every thing that might bring Lindorf to memory. His eſteem, conſequently, his affection, were redoubled; but, thinking thus, he was but the more ſtrongly confirmed in his determination of rewarding the virtue he ſo much admired.

Behold them, then, at Berlin, and alighting at Walſtein-houſe; a place of ſo much former terror to Caroline. She entered it with all thoſe gentle ſenſations, thoſe mild hopes, ſo ſweet to the ſoul, and which ſeemed a prelude of the felicity ſhe was about to enjoy. To theſe ſucceeded the recollection of her bridal day, her behaviour to the man ſhe now adored, the mixture of hope and fear concerning the real ſentiments of the Count, and the melancholy reflection on the death of her dear friend,

whom ſhe wiſhed a witneſs of her preſent happineſs. Theſe, all conſpiring, contributed but to augment that emotion which ſhe no longer could conceal, and which brought the tears into her eyes. The Count ſaw thoſe tears; his heart melted at the ſight; he attributed them to a very different cauſe, and would inſtantly have given her every aſſurance that cauſe ſhould be removed; but we have before ſeen the motives by which he was withheld. He would not give her a proſpect of bliſs as yet uncertain; nor would he have to combat with her delicacy and generoſity. Neither, indeed, had he the power to pronounce *I yield Caroline to another.* No, he might have acted; but, on ſuch a ſubject, he could not have ſpoken!

The

The High Chamberlain ſupped with them, and retired inflate with joy at beholding his daughter now eſtabliſhed Lady of Walſtein-houſe. When he was gone, the Count led Caroline to the apartment which long had been deſtined to receive her; at the time of his marriage, and while he was far from preſaging the events that were to ſucceed. He had furniſhed it with all poſſible taſte and magnificence, in the dear expectation that his young and beauteous bride was ſoon to become its inhabitant. This expectation, at laſt, was realized. But how? In what manner? And at what moment? How much might he well regret paſt ſuſpence, and the hope which, during uncertainty, he had cheriſhed!

"This, dear Caroline," ſaid he, as the entered, "is the apartment which has lon been reſerved for you." Caroline, wh ſuppoſed a latent reproach was lurking i theſe few words, looked down, and alter nately bluſhed and turned pale. Walſtei ſaw this, but ſaw not the true motive Eager to deprive her of her fears, "you, ſaid he, reſpectfully kiſſing her hand, "ar abſolute here; queen of this apartment neither I nor any one elſe ſhall enter it without your free permiſſion."

Haſtily the Count retired; had he re mained a moment longer, he, perhaps had forgotten Lindorf and all his oaths— "Ye powers of friendſhip!" cried he, as h entered his own chamber, "ſuſtain my for titude. Caroline, dear adored Caroline Lindorf, my friend, appear, be ever pre

ſen

ſent to my imagination, there inceſſantly repeat you cannot be happy aſunder!"

Thus did the whole night paſs in mourning over and lamenting his deſtiny, and the rigid ſacrifice which virtue, principle, friendſhip, and even love itſelf, loudly demanded. Caroline, though more tranquil, yet ſlept but little and reflected much. Though her chaſte ſimplicity felt not all the ſingularity of Walſtein's conduct, yet could ſhe not be wholly ignorant that her ſpouſe had a right to partake of her apartment; ſhe thought the wrongs ſhe had done him too many, and too great, not to attribute his leaving her thus to well-founded reſentment. Succeeding evenings but confirmed the idea; Walſtein, fearing again to encounter dangers he found himſelf ſo near ſinking under before, not only forbore to

accompany Caroline to her apartment but began, as he had done at Ronebourg, before ſhe knew the death of the Baroneſs, to abſent himſelf as much as poſſible, and never be with her, except in the preſence of her father, or her women; and even then he had an air of conſtraint, of anxiety, ſo viſible, he feared ſo much to meet her eyes, or to approach her touch, that ſhe no longer doubted of his indifference; nay, ſhe even dreaded it was averſion. This conduct, far from irritating, ſenſibly affected Caroline. Herſelf, alone, and her former caprice did ſhe accuſe. Perhaps he ſought to puniſh them, and he had good right; or, rather, her unjuſt ſlight, and the diſlike ſhe ſo long had teſtified, had at length wholly incurred his hatred. Yet his tender and continued cares, his mild and gentle attentions during

ing her illneſs, and her grief, what were they?—Generoſity, natural benevolence, ſympathy, compaſſion; which ever are inherent in the noble mind. But ſhe too plainly ſaw, at preſent, the chains by which he was reſtrained were become deteſtable; yes, he groaned over that fatality by which they had been united. She recollected his travelling deſign, and doubted not but he ſtill intended it ſhould take place; ſhe even, for a moment, thought to prevent his being again at the pain of propoſing her return to Rindaw; and thus, by voluntarily abſenting herſelf from the Count and the court, reſtore him the liberty of which ſhe thought him ſo ardently deſirous. But this propoſal was become much more difficult to execute than when ſhe wrote her letter at Rindaw. At preſent ſhe loved him, paſſionately loved him; and

never could ſhe collect the fortitude to abandon the object of this her moſt tender affection. Therefore, her deſign was no ſooner formed than forſaken; and to that ſucceeded the reſolution to try all poſſible means of regaining the heart of her huſband, and, by love, obliterating the remembrance of former wrongs. While ſhe meditated ſhe hoped. "He is ſo benevolent, has ſo much ſenſibility, is ſo little inclined to revenge injuries," ſaid ſhe, "that, when he ſhall behold how infinitely I love him, will he refuſe to return my love; or will he not, at leaſt, grant me his friendſhip?"

Thus did the noble and ſympathetic heart of Caroline cling to her Walſtein; thus teach her how to eſtimate his worth; and thus did hope, with mild and benignant

nant impulſe, bid her ſeek his ſociety with greater aſſiduity than even he ſought to avoid hers. Obſervant of this new ardor, the Count, far from imagining himſelf beloved, attributed all the attentions, all the thouſand kindneſſes of Caroline to ſyſtematic gratitude and duty; which a ſoul ſo feeling, and ſo virtuous, as hers, had impoſed upon itſelf. Momentary appearances confirmed the ſuſpicion. Caroline, young and timid, feeling ſenſations ſhe thought ſhe had not the power to communicate, reproaching herſelf for, and even exaggerating former errors, fearing by officiouſneſs to diſpleaſe a huſband prejudiced againſt her, often had an air of reſerve and conſtraint, which perſuaded Walſtein her heart was acting contrary to its moſt ardent deſires. Sorrowful at the ill ſucceſs of her endeavours to inſpire

affection, often would ſhe ſuffer melancholy to invade her mind; often would retire to her chamber, and on her lovely cheeks leave traces of tears which the Count imagined to be the bitter tears of duty; ſhed in lamenting the ſeverity of fate, that ſeparated her from the man ſhe loved.

Him, day after day did Walſtein wait for. Him, the lover and the friend, for whom felicity ſo ſupreme was held in reſerve; nor could he comprehend wherefore he did not return. Beſide the letter he had ſent by Varner, he had alſo written after his arrival at Berlin; and his letter, under cover to, and recommended to the care of Lindorf's banker, at Hamburg, by him to be forwarded to England, muſt have reached him if he were not already on the road, coming back. This letter

was

was more preſſing than the former. Without fully expreſſing all he meant, he uſed every argument to haſten his return. "On "this his own happineſs and the happi- "neſs of thoſe he moſt loved depended; if "prayers and entreaties were not ſufficient, "he abſolutely exacted a compliance.— "Recollect, dear Lindorf, how often you "have given me the right of diſpoſing of "your future deſtiny. This right, which "I hold from friendſhip, and, perhaps, "from gratitude ſomewhat too enthuſi- "aſtic, I now claim. Yes, I now recall "to memory every circumſtance which "may make you hold yourſelf my debtor "to tell you the hour is come when it "depends on you to cancel them all, "and, by one ſingle act, place all obliga- "tion to my account. I can only add, "if in a month, at fartheſt, I have not the

" pleaſure to embrace you, at Walſtein-
" houſe, you will give me reaſon to doubt
" of an attachment which I think I deſerve,
" and to ſuppoſe I no longer have a
" friend!"

This letter, ſo ſtrong, ſo preſſing, remaining unanſwered, gave room to imagine, and even to believe that, in fact, Lindorf had ſet out for Berlin before it arrived at England; and that conſequently he muſt ſoon be there. Dreadful as this moment was, in which a ſeparation from her he adored was to take place, ſtill Walſtein waited for it with a kind of impatience, ariſing from a conviction it would aſcertain the happineſs of Caroline, and from a wiſh of being himſelf freed from that incertitude which ſuffers the ſoul to wander among illuſive chimeras, which

an inſtant might deſtroy, and to which miſery itſelf is ſometimes preferable.

How, indeed, was he to defend himſelf againſt the phantoms of hope, ſeductive and dear as they are to the heart, and whoſe ſpells each day became more potent, more irreſiſtible? Nothing, indeed, but the modeſty and preſent error of Walſtein could have prevented him from perceiving they were not phantoms, were not illuſive. Far from deſiſting, Caroline was ſtill more affectionate, more attentive, mild and tender. The happineſs of her exiſtence was the prize for which ſhe contended. And how might ſhe perform too much for a huſband like Walſtein, whom ſhe ſo long had offended, by averſion moſt unjuſt; to whom her heart had been unfaithful, and which had ſo many errors, nay, to Caroline,

line, crimes to obliterate? Repulſing diffidence, therefore, and hoping every thing from perſeverance and affection, a thouſand kind arts were employed to draw and attach him to her, of which love alone is ſuſceptible, and to which love alone can give ſuch wondrous force.

The Count was exceedingly fond of muſic, and Caroline was inceſſant in her endeavours to arrive at excellence: Often did ſhe entreat him to accompany her on the flute or violoncello, which he played equally well; often did ſhe ſing, with all the charms of ſenſibility, the moſt expreſſive and melting airs, and ſuch as moſt were likely to make impreſſion on a ſoul like Walſtein's. The Count had a taſte and talents for drawing, but other occupations had prevented him from making

any

any great progreſs in the art. Caroline, on the contrary, educated in retirement, had applied herſelf with infinite ſucceſs to that delightful art, which can people ſolitude, and, in deſpite of wintry froſt, retrace nature's beauties, create meads, rivers, mountains, and foreſts, and make permanent the fleeting and periſhing beauties of Flora. Caroline was particularly ſucceſsful in flowers and landſcapes; which alſo was the ſpecies of painting the Count moſt preferred. She offered to inſtruct him, direct his eſſays, and correct his miſtakes; in return for which, ſhe entreated him to ſelect books, and ſuperintend ſtudies which ſhe was deſirous to engage in, but which are too generally neglected in the education of women. While he was drawing by her ſide, ſometimes would ſhe read, and her former cuſtom of

reading aloud to her dear mamma, added to the native intelligence and feeling ſhe poſſeſſed, rendered her indeed a moſt excellent reader. Walſtein, when he ſaw her fatigued, would read in his turn; and while her countenance, obedient to the powers of genius, aſſumed the paſſion or imbibed the wiſdom of the writer, her ſkilful and delicate fingers would knit, or knot, or embroider, the garter, the purſe, or the waiſtcoat; all of which were deſtined pledges of affection for her Walſtein. Ever deſirous of finding new ſources to give him pleaſure, every action had that for its object. For him only did ſhe exiſt, and continually would ſhe invent pretexts either to go into his apartment, or invite him into hers. Though ſhe ſaw no perſon but him and the High Chamberlain, who ſupped with them almoſt every evening,

evening, never was ſhe dull for want of company. Far from that, ſhe continually refuſed the ſolicitations of the Baron to preſent her at court, ſeemed moſt deſirous of prolonging her retreat, and, with mild and timid eyes turned to Walſtein, ſaid, "never before had ſhe been ſo happy!" Yet, notwithſtanding all the thouſand hourly repeated proofs of love which Caroline no longer ſought to hide, ſtill did the Count, faſcinated by fear, and dreading to yield to the ſenſations by which he was continually aſſaulted, repel truth, and retain foregone and chimerical concluſions.

"Not for me," would he ſay, "is it to be beloved. No, the affectionate, the tender, the adorable Caroline has the art of giving to friendſhip—alas! what did I ſay?

I ſay? Not even to friendſhip, but, to ſimple gratitude, all the appearance and expreſſion of love. It is not the preſence of Walſtein, but the remembrance of Lindorf, by which ſhe thus is animated; and to him, doubtleſs, doth ſhe ſecretly addreſs all thoſe affecting attentions, thoſe tender ſpeeches, and thoſe ſweet looks, which may not have me for their true object—What! know I not that ſhe loves Lindorf! Nay, that him ſhe ought to love!—Yet, ſhould it be true!—Should it be me!—Should my preſent intents, which diſtract and rend my heart, make me the moſt ungrateful of men! Should that bliſs of angels, which I am reſerving for another, be deſtined by Caroline for me!—Alas, it cannot be.—Oh! Caroline! Caroline!—Yet, how may I know what

what paſſes in her heart, without acquainting her with the ſecrets of my own; without diſcovering the paſſion by which I am conſumed? And yet how may I make this known, certain, as I am, that duty, generoſity, and compaſſion would dictate her anſwer? Though ſhe love me not, her preſent actions and manner prove ſhe would not an inſtant heſitate to ſacrifice her heart and her happineſs to me."

Thus tormented, thus agitated, by hope and fear, did the Count make both himſelf and the tender Caroline miſerable. But ſenſations ſo violent cannot long endure: Lindorf comes not, nor will the Count find, either in delicacy or friendſhip, the power to reſiſt love that thus is induſtrious to convince him it is mutual.

One

One evening, when the High Chamberlain was detained at court, the Count ſupped alone with Caroline, who was more tender, more endearing, more enchanting than uſual. If ſhe *ſaid* not I love, it was almoſt impoſſible to miſunderſtand her *actions*. The emotion, the agitation of Walſtein augmented every moment, and he muſt either betray his feelings or fly the danger. He juſt had ſtrength ſufficient to perform this painful taſk, but it was the laſt effort of reaſon. Shut up in his own apartment, he reflected on his preſent ſtate, his love, his claims, and the conduct of Caroline.

"No," ſaid he, "it is not, it cannot be, illuſive. I am beloved. I no longer have cauſe to doubt. If I touch her hand I feel it tremulous; or if ſhe takes mine ſhe gently

ly holds and preſſes it, unwilling it ſhould be withdrawn; if I quit her with mournful looks her eyes follow me; and, this very evening, I beheld them moiſtened with her tears. All the animation, all the tenderneſs of affection, were painted in her countenance; and yet I left her; yet I forbore to kneel at her feet; yet I forbear to tell her how infinitely I adore her; neglect to ſupplicate a confirmation of my happineſs, and of that love which every incident tends but to confirm."

Never had the idea preſented itſelf to him with ſo much force and certainty: it enrapt him ſo far that, no longer liſtening to ought but ſweet hope, he determined to return, confeſs his paſſion, and obtain from Caroline an avowal of hers, of which he no longer doubted. All his oaths, reſolutions,

ſolutions, and projects diſappeared; all were annihilate; he forgot that Lindorf had exiſtence: Caroline, only, he beheld! His Caroline! To him united, by him beloved, and him loving; nor was there longer mortal man who ſhould bear away this treaſure of his ſoul!—In an inſtant, Walſtein, again, is in her apartment. He ſees her not, but he hears her guittar, hears the melody of ſounds that vibrate to his heart; he approaches, ſoftly, a door, half open, that leads to a ſmall chamber, whither Caroline has retired. It was her favourite apartment; there ſhe paſſed an hour, every evening, before ſhe went to bed, reading, ſinging, or playing. Caroline was half undreſſed, reclining in an arm chair, and gently touching her guittar as ſhe ſang. The air was melancholy, and ſhe ſeemed deeply affected;

affected; ſtopped occaſionally, and put her handkerchief up to her eyes; then again continued, with leſs power, but more paſſion, in her voice. Walſtein thought he had known all her favourite ſongs, yet this was new to him. He liſtened with mute attention, earneſt to hear the words. Caroline ſang ſo low that he could only catch now and then a line, one of which, however, ſtruck him, and he liſtened ſtill more eagerly. At laſt he diſtinctly heard the following part of a ſtanza:

Ah! wherefore, Love, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If thou forſak'ſt me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

The expreſſion, the marked tenderneſs, with which ſhe ſang, were ſufficient proofs Caroline's complaint had reference to a real,

real, not an imaginary lover. But who was this lover? Was it Lindorf? Was it Walſtein? Diffidence and doubt again poſſeſſed his heart; he looks, he liſtens, and preſently the ſhadowy pleaſure of doubt itſelf vaniſhes. Caroline laid her guittar in her lap, and untied a black ribband which ſhe always wore around her neck. Till then the Count had ſuppoſed it was only an ornament, but he ſaw with ſurpriſe a miniature picture was pendant to it, and which Caroline had always carried concealed in her boſom. Too far off to diſtinguiſh the features, he yet could ſee, as ſhe put it to the candle, that it was the uniform of an officer in the Pruſſian guards; it was, therefore, the uniform and the portrait of Lindorf! Caroline, at firſt, fixed her eyes upon it, then preſſed it to her heart, and next

to

to her lips, with extreme paſſion. The tears ran down her cheeks, and fell upon the picture; ſhe carefully wiped them off, again looked and ſighed, laid it on the table, took up her guitar and ſang another ſtanza of the ſame ſong, which the Count diſtinctly heard.

The ſole, the ſov'reign, balm I find,
Dear emblem of my Love, is thee;
Thou bear'ſt his features, but his mind,
Ah! who ſhall paint its energy?
Then wherefore, Love, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If thou forſak'ſt me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

When ſhe had ended, ſhe once more took up her picture, gave it another kiſs, tied it round her neck again, and, as ſhe put it down her boſom, ſaid, with a mix-

ture of tenderneſs and chagrin, "thou, however, ſhalt never forſake me;" then, taking up her candle, paſſed into her bedchamber, after having rung for her attendants, without ſo much as looking towards the half open door. The action of riſing, the removal of Caroline, and the darkneſs, in which Walſtein was left, awakened him from a kind of ſtupor into which he had ſunk; from a dream of terror, which, as he awoke, inſtead of vaniſhing, was confirmed! All his imagined happineſs was fled, and again he was ingulphed in wretchedneſs at the very inſtant imagination had conducted him to the ultimate of bliſs! Yet, ever generous, even in the horrors of deſpair, his firſt intention was, when he had ſomewhat recovered himſelf, to go immediately to Caroline, not to intercede for himſelf, but to aſſure her Lindorf,

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her fugitive, her beloved, ſhould return, ſhould be hers. The arrival of the maids, however, prevented him from executing this his deſign, and he preſently afterwards felt he no longer had the fortitude, perſonally, to tell her he would for ever yield her to another. His heart palpitated with ſuch violence that ſuch a declaration ſeemed as if it muſt have coſt him his life, and he even ſhuddered leſt, had he ſeen her at that moment, inſtead of acting as friendſhip and juſtice required, he, in his delirium, ſhould have ſuffered paſſion to invade the rights of love.

No, he would ſee her no more! He might not, could not, durſt not, ſee her more! He ſtill found ſufficient virtue to fly, to reſtore her to liberty, but never to bid

her an eternal adieu; or again to gaze on thoſe impaſſioned eyes, the danger of which he had ſo recently proved. He returned therefore to his chamber, where he paſſed ſome hours in a ſtate of undeſcribable anguiſh, incapable of determination, of all certitude whether Love or Generoſity, Lindorf or Walſtein, ſhould prevail. He wrote letter after letter to Caroline: in one he claimed his rights, and endeavoured to move her compaſſion; deteſting his tyranny, and tearing this, he began another, in which he bad her for ever farewell; without the leaſt mention of his own excruciating pangs. "What," ſaid he, again, with increaſing agitation, tearing the paper, "ſhall ſhe even remain ignorant of the adoration in which I hold her? Shall I die without ſo much as exciting her compaſſion?"

ſion?" He began once more; once more painted his love in all its enthuſiaſm, and the ſacrifice he was about to make in all its horrors. Still leſs ſatisfied than ever, he tried anew to write with more moderation; and again and again he tried, and was each time alike unſucceſsful.

At length, however, the fatigued and exhauſted ſpirit ſank into a gloomy calm, and Walſtein came to a firm and irrevocable determination.—This was to go betimes in the morning to the King, who never was in bed long after day-break, and to whom he was never denied admittance, to obtain, immediately, without further let or delay, a divorce; to ſend it inſtantly to Caroline, and as inſtantly to leave Potſdam, retire to his eſtate at Walſtein, and

there make proper preparations for travels which he knew not when he ſhould end. The more he reflected on preſent circumſtances, and the contrary paſſions by which he ſuppoſed himſelf and Caroline tormented, the more did he perſiſt in this project, and deeply regretted not having put it in execution immediately after his arrival at Berlin; inſtead of ſuffering himſelf to be thus ſeduced by the faſcinating pleaſure of living with Caroline. "Long ſince," ſaid he, "would ſhe then have been eaſy, and I myſelf perhaps leſs wretched; I then ſhould not have known the enchantment of her ſmiles, the irreſiſtible allurement of her friendſhip, and the bewitching influence of her attentions: or, at leaſt, I ſhould have known them but in part; attentions which I interpreted into love, and which

which might have ſupplied its abſence, had I remained ignorant that ſhe loves another, over whoſe memory ſhe in ſecret mourns. —Mourn! Does Caroline mourn? Caroline! For whom I would ſacrifice a thouſand lives! And ſhall I heſitate then to yield up my happineſs?"

The thought was moſt natural and appeaſing to the noble heart of Walſtein. He wrote, or rather began to write a letter to ſend Caroline when he ſhould have obtained a divorce. He afterwards wrote alſo to the High Chamberlain, to give this tranſaction ſuch a colouring as that he might not impute it to his daughter, or Lindorf. Theſe letters he put in his pocket, and, aided by his valet de chambre, made every neceſſary preparation for

his travels. As he ſuppoſed he was no more to viſit Berlin, he paſſed the reſt of the night in putting his papers in order, and collecting certain of them, which he meant to take with him. As ſoon as day appeared, he ſet off for Potſdam, where the King then was, and entreated a ſecret audience.

How, in the mean time, was poor Caroline employed?—She awoke from a ſweet ſleep, which had calmed her inquietude, and already began to be impatient again to ſee that dear and cruel huſband, who thus fled her embraces, and whom ſhe yet had hoped to win by affection and perſeverance. Nay, indeed, ſhe had lately flattered herſelf with ſucceſs, and that there was very little of the extraordinary in

in his conduct. He ſeemed pleaſed to be with her, ſeldom left her during the day, and had all thoſe little preventive cares which are ſo peculiar to love; ſhe often caught him looking paſſionately at her, and, once, ſurpriſed him ardently kiſſing a ringlet of her hair. What more was neceſſary to Caroline? Educated in the utmoſt innocence, without friendſhip or other converſation than that of the chaſte Canoneſs, never having read other books than what ſhe recommended, ſhe was moſt happy when in the ſight and hearing of her huſband.—To ſuppoſe herſelf beloved, to paſs her life in his company, was bliſs ſupreme; and when he quitted her, at night, her only chagrin was that of being ſeparated from him till the morrow. Theſe, likewiſe, were the only moments in which

ſhe longer doubted of his love; "for," ſaid ſhe, "he might ſtay, if he pleaſed; we ſtill could converſe a little longer; or read, or ſing, and then, when I awoke in the morning, I ſhould have the dear pleaſure of ſeeing him immediately. For why might he not as well ſleep in my chamber as in his own? Oh! that I durſt but tell him ſo!—But he does not love ſo much to be with me as I do to be with him; he pines not as I do when we are aſunder."

Then would Caroline weep without knowing why; then would ſhe gaze on her little picture, kiſs it, repeat thoſe tender things ſhe durſt not ſay to the original, commit it again to her boſom, go to ſleep with it, and, on the morrow, when ſhe met

the

the Count, no more remember any thing but the pleaſure of being in his preſence.

This was nearly her diurnal hiſtory; though, on the evening we have been deſcribing, ſhe was more than uſually moved by the emotion of the Count; and, particularly, by his ſudden retreat, which came ſo unexpected, and which, by the manner of it, had produced this effect. She, then, began to reflect there was ſomething extremely ſingular in the conduct of her huſband; ſuch frequent inequality of behaviour, ſo many contradictions, and circumſtances ſhe knew not how to explain, raiſed her attention. Was ſhe beloved, or was ſhe not? To anſwer this queſtion ſhe endeavoured to recollect every incident that had any relation to Walſtein from the

moment after their arrival at Ronebourg. While thus ruminating, a ſong ſhe had compoſed, at the time the Count endeavoured to avoid her, and when ſhe imagined herſelf hated by him, was recollected, and the recollection affected her; ſhe ſang it, and her tenderneſs was redoubled. Then it was that the Count had overheard her, unfortunately, as ſhe was ending the ſong, which was as follows.

When now no longer ſtarting fears,
With boding ills, diſturb my peace;
Now love and duty dry my tears,
And bid my former terrors ceaſe;
Ah! where, my Love, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If thou forſak'ſt me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

Thy

Thy daily ſorrow, nightly care,
Each word, each look, to love I gave;
Love drove away the fiend deſpair,
And flew to ſnatch me from the grave.
Then wherefore, now, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If love forſakes me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

But if, deceiv'd, not love had aught
In what ſo well with love agrees,
To life, ah! wherefore am I brought,
To periſh by a worſe diſeaſe?
Ah! wherefore, Love, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If thou forſak'ſt me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

The ſole, the ſov'reign balm I find,
Dear emblem of my Love, is thee;
Thou bear'ſt his features, but his mind,
Ah! who ſhall paint its energy?

Then

Then wherefore, Love, or whither fly,
In ſearch of bliſs I'd fain impart?
If thou forſak'ſt me, how may I
Hope cheriſh in this bleeding heart?

Had the Count heard the firſt ſtanzas he muſt have known they related to him; but the latter, and, eſpecially, the addreſs to the picture, wholly led him into error. His portrait it could not be; and the energy was the energy of Lindorf, who, flying, thus ſacrificed his happineſs to his friend.

As to Caroline, having ſung, wept, and kiſſed her picture, ſhe went to bed much relieved and more tranquil. "He loves me," thought ſhe; "I am ſure he loves me; but he believes he is not beloved. He remembers the repugnance which I ſo unjuſtly, ſo unkindly, ſhewed on the day of our marriage. And can he ſuppoſe I ſtill am unjuſt

unjuſt and unkind? But I will undeceive him, will forget my fears, will commit all the ſecrets of my heart to the boſom of my huſband, and prove how totally this froward heart is changed. To-morrow, yes, to-morrow I am determined I will tell him all; tell him every day, and every moment that I adore him, and we then ſhall ſee whether he will fly from me thus each evening after ſupper."

This reſolution made her perfectly calm; ſhe ſlept in peace, had delightful dreams, awaked with the pureſt ſenſations of pleaſure, and was more than ever determined to execute the project ſhe had conceived on the over night. No more ſhe felt the ſame fears, the ſame diffidence of herſelf. Walſtein loves her; ſhe is convinced he loves her. Doubts and recollections of the

paſt

paſt are the occaſion of his continued reſerve. Unable any longer to ſupport theſe, ſhe, with a word, will expel them all. Yes, ſhe will prove to him, by a thouſand incidents, that he is the ſole object of her affection; that he lives and reigns ſingly and wholly in her heart. Poor Caroline! That heart of thine, ſo innocent, ſo tender, may not contain its tranſports, while, in this delirium of bliſs, thou remembereſt it ſhall no longer have a thought concealed from thy beloved Walſtein; from that noble huſband to whom thou art indebted for thy life, and to whoſe happineſs this life thou meaneſt to conſecrate. But, ah! that heart not yet knows half it has to ſuffer!

Timidity is natural to youth, and eſpecially to youth educated as Caroline had been.

been. The ſuperior virtues and wiſdom of Walſtein commanded a reſpect which not even the moſt mild benevolence could wholly obliterate. It was therefore that Caroline had been ſilent ſo long; and even now, determined as ſhe is, ſhe knows not what means are beſt, how to behave, or what to ſay; and the more the moment approaches, the more her embarraſſment is increaſed. Oh! how does ſhe regret her dear Mamma, who, had ſhe lived, would, long ſince, have been her faithful interpreter; the voluntary pledge of her truth and tenderneſs! But how might ſhe herſelf explain them? Should ſhe write?—She began, but her emotion was too great, her hand trembled, ſhe could find no expreſſions that could convey her feelings; no words were adequate to her ideas; ſhe could not frame a ſingle phraſe—

"No,"

"No," ſaid ſhe, "it will be better to go to run to him, to throw myſelf into hi arms, to ſay—Perhaps I may not ſay word, but ſurely he will underſtand m ſilence; ſurely he will not be able to loo at me without imagining what I wiſh t ſay; he will pardon me, will diſpel m fears; reſerve, diffidence, and doubt ſhall vaniſh all; he ſhall be wholly mine and I wholly his; the happieſt of wive and of women!"

The thought inflames her ardour, ſh kiſſes her little portrait to increaſe he courage, and flies to the apartment of th moſt beloved of huſbands! She enters— But no huſband is there! He ſeems no even there to have ſlept!—A large trunk in the midſt of the chamber, round which ar various other packets, ſeems to announc a removal

a removal, or a journey.—Caroline ſhakes from head to foot! Scarcely has ſhe ſtrength to ring the bell! A footman appears; tremblingly ſhe aſks—"Where is my Lord the Count?"

The footman, ſurpriſed at the queſtion, anſwers, "I thought my Lady had known"—

"Known, what?"

"That my Lord ſet off betimes this morning."

"Set off!——God!"——

"William, his valet de chambre, has been up all night, making ready. He has left orders that this trunk and theſe packets ſhould follow. He does not know where

where my Lord is going, but he believes to England."

"England!——Leave me!"

The footman goes, and Caroline ſinks in the firſt chair ſhe can ſtagger to; where, for the ſecond time in her life, ſhe feels all the affliction, all the torture of deſpairing love. A ſecond time ſees the man ſhe loves neglect, abandon, fly from her!—But what a difference between the preſent and the former flight! When, at Rindaw, Lindorf left her, it was neceſſity, it was virtue, it was her own wiſh; the ſeparation was a cruel one, but the reflection that ſhe had done her duty was, indeed, the moſt effective conſolation! Beſide, ſhe knew ſhe was beloved, and that he who fled partook of all her affliction. Far different

different are her preſent pangs, which every circumſtance but augments. Not a clandeſtine lover but a beloved huſband flies, in whom every hope of future felicity centers. A huſband that hates her; or could he abandon her in a manner like this?—At what a moment too!

"Oh God! Then when I flew to him with open arms, when I imagined how unſpeakable his joy would be; then to depart, without mentioning the leaſt word of his intent, without ſeeing me once again! This muſt be hatred, or a moſt cruel, moſt unconquerable indifference! Yet, yeſterday evening, how did he look at me! With what tenderneſs did he take my hand, and preſs it to his heart!—It is true, he repulſed it again with terror, and inſtantly left me!—For ever left me!—No,

no;

no; it cannot, it ſhall not be. He is no diſſembler. Walſtein is not the moſt barbarous of all human beings.—It is error—The ſervant is miſtaken; he will return; yes, he will, he muſt; and here will I wait his return.

Scarcely had the poor diſtreſſed Caroline indulged this momentary glimpſe of hope, which ſomewhat recovered her ſunk ſpirits, before the footman re-entered, and brought her a packet of papers, ſealed up. —"It comes from my Lord, the Count; the courier is this moment arrived from Potſdam."

Caroline had juſt ſufficient ſtrength to receive it, and, by a ſign, bid him retire. And now behold her alone, holding the packet ſhe dares not open. Life or death

lies

lies there ſealed up. It was large, and addreſſed *to the Counteſs Caroline, Baroneſs of Lichtfield, in her Hotel*—It was ſtrange, this; moſt ſtrange!—"What! will he not call me by his name? God of Heaven! Is it poſſible?" Her trembling fingers break the ſeals; and, as the cover is torn, ſhe finds, firſt, a parchment deed, next, three letters, and, laſt, an unſealed open paper, on which her eyes are rivetted.

Souls of ſympathy, that now with Caroline remain in fearful ſuſpenſe, imagine a paper, a fatal paper, ſigned by the king, ſealed by the king; imagine a deed, or rather a declaration of divorce, by which *the King conſents to the diſſolution of the marriage of Edmund Auguſtus Walſtein and Caroline of Lichtfield, decrees it null and void,*

void, and the parties free to contract elſe-where!

Yes, the eyes of Caroline were rivetted, wild, yet ſhed not a ſingle tear! Thus, a while, ſhe ſtood: at length, the writings dropped from her hands, a dark cloud enveloped her, a cold ſweat overſpread her pale face; ſhe ſees no more, breathes no more, a univerſal palpitation ſeizes her; her laſt thought is a hope that the hand of death is upon her, and ſhe ſinks into inſenſibility!

Thus did ſhe ſome time remain; and, when nature began ſomewhat to revive, ſhe imagined ſhe had been in a fearful dream; but not long did this deception continue: the chamber, the trunks, the letters, the paper were there, witneſſes of the reality

of her wretchedneſs. She looks at the direction of thoſe letters. The firſt is to her father, the ſecond to Caroline, and is rejected with horror.—"What can he ſay, while thus he murders me, while thus he himſelf diſſolves our union?"

She examines the third and what is her ſurpriſe! It is directed to the Baron of Lindorf, at Walſtein-houſe, Berlin; and at the bottom of the direction is written, *I conjure Caroline to give this letter, with her own hand, to my friend, the very moment he arrives, which muſt be ſoon*—"To Lindorf!" exclaimed ſhe. "At his own houſe! And to me the letter entruſted! Oh God! Oh God! what can be the meaning of this! Lindorf here!—Could he be capable!—Is he the cauſe of?—Oh! would to God it may be jealouſy! How eaſily ſhall I be able to prove it groundleſs!"

Caroline eagerly takes up the rejected letter, addreſſed to her, opens it, begins to read, and hope revives in her heart. —No! not jealouſy, not hatred, not indifference, not reſentment, are there; but generoſity, delicacy, love; paſſionate love, tender, exceſſive, heroic love; and in an inſtant Caroline paſſes from the depths of miſery to the pureſt heaven of bliſs. "He loves me! He loves me!" ſaid ſhe. "He loves me, and our marriage is not diſſolved! Soon ſhall he know Caroline loves him alſo; will be his, and his only; will exiſt for him, with him, by him, and never, while life endures, will leave him more!" Bleſſed as this letter was, ſcarcely could ſhe end it, ſo eager was ſhe to give orders, inſtantly, to prepare the poſt chariot; but, while it is preparing, again ſhe reads, again ſhe devours its contents. The

words

words are hoſts of angels, and the ſmall paper the infinite regions of bliſs.

"Dear and tender Caroline, ceaſe to "grieve, ceaſe to ſubdue your feelings; "not to a tyrant has the care of your "happineſs been committed. The tears "I have ſo lately ſeen fall, on the picture "of a regretted lover, ſhall be the laſt "which for this reaſon you ſhall ſhed—— "Oh! may my prayers be heard, and "may the God of goodneſs grant, as an "ample reward for my own ſufferings, "that her whom I adore may be hence- "forth, and for ever, happy; then ſhall I, "though ſeparate and far, far from her, "though knowing her another's, ſtill be "able to ſupport exiſtence. Yes, angel "of my ſoul, be happy; be his whom "your heart hath ſelected, and who merits,

" at leaſt as much as mortal may, a bleſ-
" ſing ſo ſupreme. No longer ſhall your
" ſenſibility, by virtue tortured, lament
" a union which your ſoul abhors; no
" longer ſhall you ſhed thoſe ſecret and
" corroding tears, which I would rather
" periſh than be the cauſe of. Love and
" duty ſhall be allied.

" Oh Caroline! ſtill do I hear thoſe
" moving, thoſe paſſionate ſounds, dic-
" tated by grief, and addreſſed to the ob-
" ject of your tenderneſs. But complain
" no more; no more reproach him with
" an involuntary abſence which he to
" friendſhip thought he owed. He ſhall
" be reſtored to your arms, Caroline; you
" ſhall ſee him, kneeling at your feet, and
" preſently ſhall you both forget your
" former pains.

" Pardon,

" Pardon, Oh! pardon, Caroline, that
" I ſo long have neglected to give you
" happineſs and joy. From the moment
" that firſt I learned your ſecret, that fatal
" moment when I ſaw you expiring, when
" I felt there was a degree of miſery ſu-
" perior even to that of reſigning you, I
" then ſwore to unite you to each other.
" Caroline, thou thyſelf canſt witneſs how
" ſacred I have held the wife of my friend,
" the beloved of Lindorf—yet will I own,
" blinded by my paſſion, I have had mo-
" mentary illuſions, have thought it poſſi-
" ble I might myſelf be ineffably bleſſed,
" have miſinterpreted the efforts of duty
" and virtue into ſofter ſenſations, and had
" almoſt prepared the iron ſcourge of
" never-ending regret for myſelf, and
" pining grief and melancholy for
" thee. But it is paſt, the charm is

" broken, and I feel it is time to fly. Yes,
" in a delirium of hope was I almoſt loſt;
" but, with the firſt rays of returning day,
" I will depart to obtain what ſhall for
" ever baniſh all ſuch future raſh hopes,
" to which I have too, too, weakly yielded.
" I go to reſtore you to yourſelf; or, rather,
" to the original of that picture you hold
" ſo dear. Farewell, Caroline; I perceive
" I ſay what I ought not; I ſhall give a
" pang to your generous and tender heart,
" by expoſing the weakneſs of my own.
" At length, however, dear Caroline,
" know me for what I am. Know that,
" be my miſery what it may in quitting
" you, in renouncing you thus eternally,
" it ſtill would be infinitely greater were
" I to remain and uſurp thoſe rights which
" are due to love alone. To poſſeſs the
" perſon of Caroline, and to know that

" another

" another poſſeſſes her heart, to be equally
" an impediment to her happineſs and the
" happineſs of a dear and reſpected friend,
" this were impoſſible to ſupport! But to
" be a ſpectator of, or, at leaſt, to imagine,
" your mutual felicity, will ſpread a gleam
" of comfort over deſponding life. Ca-
" roline will owe that felicity to me, will
" think of me with tenderneſs and grati-
" tude, and thus, while I live, I ſhall live
" certain of her friendſhip, and when I die
" ſhe will ſhed a tear over my tomb.—
" Farewell!—Caroline, farewell! I fly to
" merit the friendſhip I ſo earneſtly covet.

" *Berlin, five o'clock in the morning.*

" *P. S. Dated at Potſdam, ten o'clock,*
" *and after having had an audience with the*
" *King.*

" All is over, the chains which have
" ever hung ſo heavy on Caroline are

" broken. She is free, and ſhall ſoon be " Lindorf's. Oh! tell me, tell me, Ca- " roline, that you are happy. Let me have " this conſolation——My friend is igno- " rant of the bliſs that awaits him. I know " his generous friendſhip, and the ſame " feelings that drove him from Rindaw, " and his country, may, perhaps, ſtill make " him refuſe this felicity. This muſt not " be: to prevent it I have written a " letter, addreſſed to him, which will end " all his ſcruples, and prove that he only " can contribute to the ſmall degree of " happineſs of which Walſtein is now ca- " pable, by making himſelf and Caroline " happy.

" I ſtill have a favour to aſk, and, ſurely, " Caroline, in a moment like this, will not, " by refuſal, increaſe my griefs. No, I " know

" know her heart too well.—It is to accept
" the houſe ſhe at preſent inhabits. You
" like its ſituation, Caroline; your apart-
" ments pleaſe you; they were deſigned
" for you, furniſhed for you, and never
" ſhall any one but you inhabit them—
" You will not, ſurely you will not, by a
" cruel denial, make your wretched friend
" ſtill more wretched.

" Again and again, farewell! Dear and
" adored Caroline, farewell!—And is it
" true, then, that you are no longer mine,
" that I no longer have the leaſt right?—
" What talk I of rights, I never had any;
" thoſe the heart only can accord, and, at
" preſent, I ſhall be certain of your pity
" and eſteem. Ah would you but ſome-
" times write to me, would you but de-
" ſcribe your happineſs—But no, it can-

" not be: never muſt I write to the wife of
" Lindorf. If Caroline of Lichtfield will
" for once deign to anſwer me, only once,
" before ſhe bears another name, her letter
" will reach me at Walſtein, where I ſhall
" remain eight days, before I ſet off to
" Dreſden, to viſit my ſiſter.

" I am going to depart!—And ſhall I
" never ſee you more? Shall thoſe hea-
" venly hours which, by your ſide, I have
" paſſed, never return? Shall I never more
" liſten to your ſweet voice?—Caroline, I
" rave, for never, while thought remains,
" will you be abſent from my imagination.
" Whatever hoſpitable, or inhoſpitable,
" land may contain my body, my ſoul will
" be ever preſent with you.

" Herewith

"Herewith I ſend the King's confirma-
"tion of your liberty, a letter to your
"father, one to—to your huſband, and
"the deed of conveyance of Walſtein-houſe.
"Let me know, at leaſt, that you have re-
"ceived thoſe papers; let me, once again,
"entreat you to tell me you are happy,
"and all the purpoſes of this world are
"ended with

"EDMUND AUGUSTUS WALSTEIN."

Again this dear letter is read till the chariot is ready, except juſt for a moment that Caroline runs into her own apartment to fetch the manuſcript of Lindorf; the picture, that principal cauſe of miſtake, is warm in her boſom. And now ſhe departs, entreating, conjuring the poſtillions to be expeditious, and, notwithſtanding all their endeavours to oblige ſo ſweet a

petitioner, ſtill ſhe finds they go but ſlowly. The Count was ſome hours before her, and yet, ſo great was the diligence ſhe uſed, he had not been very long at Walſtein before ſhe arrived. Shut up in his cloſet, a prey to the moſt violent grief, inſenſible of every thing but the loſs of Caroline, whom he never was more to behold, dead even to the conſolations of virtue, he there had retired from the world, and the ſight of human being. A momentary gleam of comfort had come over him when he firſt was met by his vaſſals and ſervants. Louiſa, Juſtin, and the aged Joſſelin, had been at the head of them, had fallen and claſped the knees of their benefactor, had preſented their two little boys, and, with bleſſings and prayers, and ſmiles, and tears, had given him ſalutation. Louiſa was pregnant again. "Oh! my Lord," ſaid

ſhe,

ſhe, "your arrival is the forerunner of happineſs. I ſhall have a little girl, for which ſo often I have prayed; and now my Lord is married, if my Lady, the Counteſs, will but have the goodneſs to ſtand Godmother, and let my child be chriſtened after her, I ſhall never be thankful enough for the favor."

The grateful Louiſa ſpoke daggers! The Count could not ſupport it.—"Alas! child, I am—I am no longer"—Walſtein was obliged to break off abruptly and fly to conceal the burſting efforts of nature.

Theſe good people ſtill were aſſembled in the court, and with them ſome of the villagers, who all were lamenting the grief in which they had ſeen their good lord, when Caroline arrived. She opened the door,

ſprang

ſprang from her chariot, and, without ſeeing or hearing perſon or object that ſurrounded her, exclaimed, "Where is he? Where is the Count?"

William flew!—"Here is my Lady the Counteſs!"—

"Yes, dear William, here am I! Where is he? Lead me to him inſtantly!"

William ran before her, pointed to his maſter's cloſet door, and retired. Caroline opens it, runs, falls into his arms, and in a broken voice exclaims, "My Lord! My Huſband!—Wherefore haſt thou quitted thus thy Caroline, who adores thee, who loves thee and thee only in all the world, and whom thou wilt kill ſhouldeſt thou abandon her?"

The

The haſte with which ſhe ran, her eagerneſs, her ſobs, all cut ſpeech ſhort and interrupted reſpiration; her head reclined on the ſhoulder of the Count, her arms hung round his neck, and her tears fell into his boſom. Waliſtein was not leſs agitated than herſelf; at laſt, taking her in his arms and placing her on a ſopha, he falls at her feet.

"Caroline!——Caroline!——Is it you, Caroline?——Is it, or is it ſome pitying angel who has aſſumed your form? Can what I have heard be poſſible?"

"Doubt it not, doubt it not! Here, here (Caroline untied the ribband and took the portrait from her boſom) look, behold the picture I love; nay, look at it well; ſay whoſe likeneſs it is; behold who thus

entirely poſſeſſes my heart, and for whom alone I would live and die!"

Walſtein looked!—With aſtoniſhment looked!—It was he!—Good God! he himſelf! At leaſt ſuch as he himſelf had been; and Caroline proved ſhe ſtill beheld him as he had been, and that, to her, he had undergone no change. True it was, indeed, that he every day became more like his portrait, and that, at preſent, the likeneſs even could not be miſtaken. But by what magic, what miracle could this portrait, of the exiſtence of which the Count himſelf was ignorant, fall into the hands of Caroline, be worn next her heart, and become the object of her deareſt, her tendereſt careſſes? He looks, he faulters, he is ready to ſink under the exceſs, and yet cannot he believe it real! It is a heavenly dream

dream out of which he fears to awake! Few are his words, but thoſe few all are expreſſive of rapture, aſtoniſhment, and remaining doubt. As ſoon as paſſion would permit, Caroline, bluſhing, drew from her pocket all the letters and the manuſcript which Lindorf had left her—"Take theſe," ſaid ſhe, "read, and you will know all. No more will I have any ſecrets for my Walſtein; they have already made me too wretched.—Yes, I loved Lindorf; at leaſt, I had ſenſations that bore ſome reſemblance to thoſe I feel at preſent. What the difference is you yourſelf ſhall judge. When Lindorf left me, at Rindaw, I wept; yes, wept, and not a little; but my grief ſoon found alleviation, ſoon ſubſided, and ſoon did this ſmall picture become dearer to my heart than Lindorf. This morning, on the contrary, I wept not, when I received the

fearful

fearful ſentence of ſeparation. Not a tear eſcaped: but I thought either death or diſtraction muſt have been the inſtantaneous effect, and ſhould you perſiſt in that your dreadful deſign it would be as though you were to ſay to me *Caroline, I wiſh thee dead*—But, Oh! rather ſay 'Caroline, I wiſh thee mine, and mine thou ever ſhalt be'—Here—here is the paper! The—the Divorce! Look how inſignificant it is at preſent!"

It was torn in a thouſand pieces, and Caroline caſt it with indignation into the fire—Walſtein could not utter a word! He gazed, he wept, he took her hand, preſſed it to his lips, to his heart—He gazed again, and exclamations, without connection, without meaning, ſucceeded each other. He took up his own picture, and, in his delirium,

lirium, kiſſed it with tranſport! It was the ſacred proof of the affection of his dear Caroline!

Caroline preſſed him, once more, to read the manuſcript, but this he could not, this would have been to have taken his eyes off her, and have robbed himſelf of moments the moſt precious, the moſt ecſtatic the human heart knows.—"No, dear Caroline, do not, do not aſk me to read now. I do read, I read your heart, I there find I am beloved; and what farther knowledge can I want?"

"But you know not the hiſtory of the portrait." "No matter; I know it dear to you, and that is all I wiſh to know."

"Nay, but hear, at leaſt, that it was

Lindorf

Lindorf who taught me to eſtimate the worth of Walſtein; who firſt inſpired admiration, which was afterward productive of love."

"Lindorf!"

"Yes, let me do him juſtice; to Lindorf you are indebted for the heart of your Caroline."

"To Lindorf!——Generous Friend!"

"To you he owes every thing."

"No, no, I am indebted to him for more than life."

Walſtein then took the manuſcript and read, and Caroline preſently ſaw the ſtruggling efforts of ſenſibility; often was he obliged to ſtop, and endeavoured to ſtifle his

tears,

tears, and as often did he tell Caroline, with a broken and paſſionate voice, that Lindorf moſt merited her affection. Caroline, with her angel hand, ſtopped his mouth, and obliged him to continue his reading. He paſſed rapidly over events which were already familiar to his memory, but when he came to the epocha of the firſt meeting of Lindorf and Caroline, his very ſoul ſeemed a part of the paper, each ſyllable, each phraſe was devoured, and he read with his eyes only, for circumſtances like theſe might not be read aloud. Caroline, with fixed looks, continually endeavoured to diſcover the different ſenſations by which he was agitated.

When he had ended, he gave her back the manuſcript in a manner that ſhewed how much he had been moved.—" I ſee," ſaid

ſaid he, "I have a wife and a friend ſuch as never man had, and that they both have ſacrificed their own felicity to mine—Ah! wherefore, Caroline, did you oblige me to read this manuſcript? Why not leave me in that bleſſed dream into which I ſo lately had been lulled?"

"A dream! Unkind Walſtein! Is that an epithet for feelings ſuch as mine? Do you forget that this is your picture?"—The word picture, pronounced with the utmoſt affection, was convincing, and reſtored the Count all his confidence and bliſs. —"And now" ſaid ſhe, "that you have read your own ſtory, and that of Lindorf, liſten to the hiſtory of my heart."

Caroline, then, circumſtantially, related all that had paſſed from the moment of their

their marriage: the innocence with which ſhe ſuppoſed ſhe loved Lindorf as a brother and her terror at firſt imagining him a lover; the ſcene of the garden, of the pavilion, her grief, her tears, her regret, her ſtruggles, all were told. She next informed him how, induced by eſteem and admiration at reading his letters to Lindorf, ſhe had begun to think of him, to look at and love his portrait; ſpoke of what ſhe felt on receiving the letter in which he propoſed to leave his country, and of the delicacy, the ſenſations, and the mixture of chagrin that had occaſioned her anſwer. When ſhe came to the court yard of Ronebourg, "I proteſt, I vow," ſaid ſhe, "it was agitation only at finding myſelf ſo unexpectedly in the preſence of a huſband whom I had ſo cruelly wronged, and by whom I had ſo much cauſe to be hated; it was not Lin-

dorf. No, you long had utterly effaced every impreſſion he had made upon my heart."

The Count liſtened in rapture. He was enchanted, and took care not to give her the leaſt interruption. With what enthuſiaſm, what truth, what eloquence, what affection, did ſhe ſpeak! How did ſhe dwell on every circumſtance of her recovery at Ronebourg, of her hopes and fears ſince their arrival at Berlin, and her continual intention of explaining her feelings; of the timidity by which ſhe was reſtrained; of her deſire to pleaſe him, to win his affection, to attach him wholly to herſelf, and make him happy; of her grief at her ill ſucceſs, her reſolution, that very morning, of ſpeaking, and her extreme affliction at finding him gone; of her deſpair at receiving the fatal packet, and

of

of the joy that ſucceeded when ſhe was ſo fully convinced, from his letter, how dearly ſhe was beloved by her huſband. All was expreſſed with that rapidity, that perſuaſion, that paſſion, which ſo entirely remove doubt. —" At preſent," added ſhe, " you are as perfectly acquainted with Caroline as ſhe is with herſelf; I have nothing more to relate, except to paint how happy I am. Oh! but how? It is wholly impoſſible! I love, am beloved, and may, without a bluſh, receive and return all the moſt endearing proofs of love! Yes, my dear Lord, our hearts are now acquainted with each other. Eſtimate mine by your own!"

Walſtein would have replied, would have entered into explanations concerning his own conduct, but he was interrupted by the arrival of William. He entered, ſay-

ing that the villagers, having heard the beauteous lady they had ſeen was the Counteſs, were very unwilling to go without being permitted to ſee her again, and very earneſtly entreated ſhe would let them pay their duty to her, if it were but for a moment. Caroline, led by Walſtein, deſcended into the court, and was received with redoubled cries of "*Life! Happineſs and long life, to my Lord and my Lady!*" The Count ordered wine and money to be diſtributed, and Caroline, claſping his hand, moſt affectionately, whiſpered, "theſe good people, my Walſtein, know not that they really celebrate our bridal day, the epocha of happineſs confirmed!—Would you but permit"—

"Permit, Caroline!—Speak, command."

"See what a number of young people here are. Do you not think there are ſome lovers, among them, who wiſh to marry, but whom poverty keeps aſunder? Ah! let us make them as happy as we are ourſelves!"

The Count kiſſed her hand with tranſport.—"Dear, adorable Caroline!—Let us do ſtill more; let us perpetuate the memory of this fortunate day, ſince it is the day when Caroline is given to my arms. Let us, here, in this ſcene of bliſs, annually, beſtow ſix marriage portions, and do thou, my Caroline, inform the good peaſants of the inſtitution."

Caroline again preſſed the hand of Walſtein, ſpoke to the people, and new acclamations, new benedictions were uttered

with redoubled fervency; in the midſt of theſe tumultuous tranſports, the voices of young lovers were ſtill louder and more ardent than the others, and their prayers that God might for ever bleſs their good Lord and Lady reached the ſkies!

Walſtein, perceiving Louiſa and Juſtin in one corner of the court, with their little family, called, and preſented them to Caroline. "Here, my love," ſaid he, "are ſome good people with whom you are already acquainted." "Ah!" ſaid Caroline, "this is the beauteous Louiſa."—Louiſa bluſhed and became more beautiful; for, though childbearing and the duties of her ſtation had ſomewhat faded the roſes on her cheeks, ſhe ſtill was exceedingly handſome.

"Oh!

"Oh! yes, my Lady," ſaid Juſtin, with his open expreſſive countenance, which at once beſpoke the capacity of his mind and the honeſty of his heart: "You are very right; this is my beauteous Louiſa: there's not a man in the world, 'tis my opinion, has ſo handſome a wife, except my Lord the Count; and that is but juſt. It is the recompenſe of heaven for having beſtowed Louiſa on the poor Juſtin."

It was now Caroline's turn to bluſh! She careſſed the two boys who were fine little fellows, and, perceiving the pregnancy of Louiſa, prevented her petition, by offering, of her own accord, to ſtand godmother to the child. Louiſa would have knelt at her feet, if Caroline would have ſuffered her; but Juſtin nothing could reſtrain; he kiſſed the hem of her robe, and,

riſing, ſaid, "Surely God loves me, for he hears and grants me all my prayers! No ſooner did I aſk him to give me Louiſa than he put it into the heart of my Lord to make her mine; and then I again begged a Louiſa for my Lord, and behold he has found one! Well then, I next will pray him to grant my Lady two little boys, as handſome as ours; nay and I have no doubt but they will ſoon be here."

Caroline turned away, ſtooped to the children, and gave each of them a kiſs and a ducat, while Walſtein, affected, ſhook Juſtin by the hand, and threw his purſe into his hat. To eſcape thanks and prevent the efforts of gratitude, which, when beyond expreſſion, are always painful, he aſked Caroline to walk in the garden, to which ſhe inſtantly agreed. It was then

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the month of December, the air was piercing, the earth covered with ſnow, and the waters with froſt, yet neither froſt nor ſnow were ſeen, nor was the ſharp air felt by Caroline and Walſtein. Never did walk in ſpring appear to them ſo delicious. Long has it been known that love can embelliſh all things, and that, where the beloved object is preſent, there is neither winter nor ſummer, ſpring nor fall. Indeed, the gardens were remarkable for their beauty, extent, and the taſte with which they were diſpoſed; and, as ſuch, were viſited by travellers. Caroline had ſeen ſomething of them, on her other bridal day, and perhaps more than ſhe ſaw at preſent, though ſhe now walked all over them. At length, the Count, fearing the effect of the cold, brought her back to the Chateau. Here they found a collation ſuch as the ruſtic

hoards of Louiſa could afford. She had been buſy in providing cream, new cheeſe, cheſnuts, honeycombs, and a part of the kid that Juſtin had killed. "How fortunate it was," ſaid Louiſa, "that I had it ready dreſſed to regale our good old father."

"What Joſſelin!" cried Caroline; "nay then, Louiſa, you muſt go and bring him to eat with us." Louiſa ran to ſeek him, and in the Sire came, ſupported by Juſtin, and tremulous ſtill more with joy than old age. The Count and Caroline roſe, both went to him, and, each taking him by an arm, placed him in a great chair; after which the Count, filling him a bumper, ſaid, "Drink this, my brave Joſſelin, to the health of the happieſt of mortals!"

"And this," ſaid Juſtin, "to him who well deſerves to be the happieſt!"

Joſſelin

Joſſelin would have ſpoken, but he was ſo much affected he could only utter parts of ſentences, and raiſe his hands and eyes to heaven. After, however, having drank a third glaſs to the health of my lady the Counteſs, and after a long look at her, he ſuddenly exclaimed—" Bleſſed be God for having made ſo beauteous a Lady purpoſely for our good Lord! Oh yes! you are beautiful, madam, and very, very good! I can ſee, I am ſure you are; but you have an angel for a huſband! Did you know what he has done for us, how he preſerved, how he provided for, my Louiſa!"

And now the good Joſſelin, animated by wine, and having once begun to ſpeak, was not willing to be ſilent. He recounted the whole hiſtory, to Caroline, of the marriage of his daughter; and how he would not hear of Juſtin, and how my

Lord the Count came round him, and how he gave them a good farm, and fifty ducats down, and how he had the misfortune to wound himſelf as he went from their houſe, and how they carried him on hurdles to the Chateau of Ronebourg; and a thouſand other *bows* which Caroline knew as well as he, yet would ſhe not interrupt him; the pleaſure the old man felt in talking was a pleaſure to Caroline; nay, ſhe even liſtened with delight to this ſimple but natural village eloquence; it flowed pure from the heart and never thought of well-placed words or ſtudied expreſſions; and particularly to the praiſe of Walſtein, which was inceſſantly repeated, and which drew the ſweeteſt tears of ſenſibility to her eyes. She looked up to this dear, this beloved huſband, and ſaw his heart in ſympathy with hers; ſhe ſtretched

out

out her hand to him with a ſoft ſmile, an expreſſion which no words can convey. Love, virtue, and happineſs were united, and this ſingle moment would have been a large compenſation for an age of pain.

Joſſelin drank, talked, and became more and more animated. He ſpoke of his houſe, his family, the care his children took of him, of his dear Juſtin, who was the beſt of ſons, of huſbands, and of fathers. "An it were to do again," ſaid he, "I would give him my Louiſa if he were not worth a groat. Not, my Lord, that your bounty has done any harm. And then when I ſee theſe little urchins, playful, capering round me—Ah! how does it rejoice my very heart! It makes me young again; and, if my dear Cicely were ſtill living, I ſhould be happier now than

ever——But, pray, my Lord, what is become of our maſter's ſon, the young Baron of Lindorf? I can remember him leſs than either of theſe. Many a time have I had him in my arms: nay, I am his nurſe father, and ſhall always love him. I was told he was going to marry the ſiſter of my Lord, and right glad we were to hear it; for ſuch honourable noble ſouls ought to marry. Is it true, my Lord? Is he your brother?"

"Not yet," ſaid Caroline, riſing, and returning Louiſa's youngeſt boy to his mother, whom, till then, ſhe had held in her lap. Juſtin and Louiſa underſtood by this it was time to retire, and Louiſa hinted as much to her father; but the old man was ſo happy, in his arm chair, with the Count, the Counteſs, and the bottle, that he could

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by no means reſolve to leave them. "Let me alone, my child," ſaid he; "it is the happieſt day I ever beheld, and, at my time of life, one has not much happineſs to loſe."—"But we are troubleſome, father," ſaid Louiſa, "to my Lord the Count." "Not in the leaſt, I tell thee; thou art a fooliſh girl; I know him better than thou doſt; why it is his delight to ſee others happy; is it not, my Lord? Am not I right, and is not ſhe wrong? But our children, now a days, will be wiſer than their fathers."

Walſtein ſmiled, and Caroline again ſat down, and made a ſign to Louiſa; while the old man, more happy than a monarch, began to ſing. He could not finiſh his ſong. "So it is," ſaid he, "I am good for nothing now; but I have a heart

for

for all that. Ah! madam, if you had but heard me give the word of command! But come, ſon Juſtin, it is now thy turn. Where is thy flageolet? Play madam a tune. Louiſa ſhall ſing, and the little apes here ſhall dance. Pſhaw, what ſimpletons you are, you think of nothing: an it were not for me, here would you leave my Lord and Lady to yawn themſelves to ſleep."

Caroline having ſignified ſhe really ſhould be glad to hear Juſtin play, he took out his flageolet and played ſome almemandes, to which the little ones danced with much more grace and meaning than could have been expected, while their mother watched every motion, and the old man chuckled as he looked at the Count and Counteſs. "Did not I tell you,"

you," ſaid he, "it was worth your ſeeing? and now, Louiſa, do thou ſing the ſong thy huſband made a few days ago."

"How!" cried Caroline; "is Juſtin a Poet too?"

"No, Madam, no poet." ſaid Juſtin: "I only write a couplet now and then for my Louiſa." He then played a wild pleaſing melody, by way of ſymphony, on his flageolet, and Louiſa, with the timid ſimplicity and ſweetneſs of the village voice, ſung as follows.

The marriage honey moon, they ſay,
Grown languid on the marriage day,
Now ſcarce, alas! that day outlives;
But, ah! Louiſa, thou doſt prove
How little ſuch folks know of love,
Who thus deſcribe the joys it gives!

Poor filly people! Wherefore tire
Of bliſs which I ſo much admire,
Taſte each returning day ſo pure;
And, feeling how I ſtill adore,
Still each returning day am more
Convinc'd it ever ſhall endure?

I hear of kings and mighty men,
I know no kings, and, therefore, can
No fancies form of kingly joys;
But this I know, not lands or towns,
No, I'd not give for globes or crowns
My dear Louiſa and my boys.

Louiſa ended, and Juſtin laid down his flageolet. He had ſuppoſed it poſſible that, as he himſelf loved ſo much to hear his Louiſa ſing, others might wiſh to hear her ſing likewiſe; foreſeeing, therefore, this occaſion, and overflowing with gratitude at the return of his Lord, while the Count and Caroline had walked into the garden, Juſtin, anxious to make this gratitude known,

known, had compoſed the following ſtanza, which, modeſtly advancing a few ſteps, he himſelf now ſung.

Ah! might my artleſs ſong but ſhow
How much to my kind Lord I owe;
Might I but half I feel impart;
I then, to all my former ſtore,
Should add one grateful pleaſure more,
And eaſe my now half burſting heart.

Juſtin ſung with as much feeling as he wrote, and the Count and Caroline, affected and aſtoniſhed at his talents, gave him all the praiſe he merited. The modeſt and the ſimple Juſtin ſaid it was Louiſa who had taught him every thing, for had it not been for the pleaſure he took in pleaſing her he ſhould have known nothing. "But," ſaid Caroline, "have you compoſed this laſt ſtanza inſtantly, and without having thought on it before?"—

"Not

"Not entirely," replied Juſtin; "though I do think, my Lady, I could undertake, ay and perform too, a more difficult thing for my Lord the Count."

The heart of Caroline was full, or rather overflowing. During the ſong, the good Joſſelin had fallen aſleep, but his children awaked him ſufficiently to get him away, and as ſoon as Caroline was alone with the Count ſhe gave vent to the ſweeteſt tears ſhe had ever ſhed. The old man, the happy couple, the veneration and love they all had for the Count, which extended itſelf to her, had all together ſuch an effect upon her feelings, and imagination, that her huſband appeared a ſupernatural being, a benevolent Deity, whom it was her duty to adore, and whom, in reality, adore ſhe did. As ſoon as her mind was a little calm, "permit me, my dear Lord," ſaid ſhe, "to aſk you

you the ſame queſtion that Joſſelin aſked ſome time ſince. Will not Lindorf become our brother?"

"Would to Heaven he might," anſwered the Count; "but you forget, my love"——

"What?"

"That it is not Matilda, now, who could make Lindorf happy."

"And why not?"

"Becauſe, for ſome months, he was in love with Caroline of Lichtfield."

"But that Caroline no longer exiſts; he will never ſee her more; in her ſtead he will find Caroline of Walſtein, who never can inſpire any thing but fraternal friendſhip,

ſhip, which cannot any way impede his love for Matilda. Let him but ſee her, once again, and he himſelf will not be able to comprehend how he might, for a moment, forget her. I wiſh I were certain that Matilda's affections have undergone no change; there is a word in one of your letters which gave me a little uneaſineſs. Do you ſuſpect ſhe does not love Lindorf, and that the Baron de Zaſtrow"——Walſtein ſmiled, preſſed the hand of Caroline, and interrupted her by taking out his pocket book and giving Caroline the laſt letter he had received from Matilda to read——And, Oh! how much affected was ſhe as ſhe read! How often did ſhe repeat, "Dear girl! Charming Matilda! Lovely Siſter! Yes, thou ſhalt live with us, ſhalt regain thy lover, thy brother, and the tendereſt of friends. But why," added ſhe, as ſhe returned the letter

letter to the Count, "did not you, my Lord, immediately fly to Dreſden, to give aid and eaſe to this dear Siſter?"

"I will tell you why, my love—My Caroline was dying, and while ſhe was in danger could I leave her?"

"Well, but you anſwered Matilda's letter?"

"I did; though, at preſent, I wiſh I had not; and confeſs I begin to be uneaſy at her ſilence."

"Good Heaven! How you muſt have grieved her! Dear Matilda!"——Then, ſuddenly riſing, Caroline, with claſped hands and ardent impetuoſity, went up to the Count, and, with a tone of moſt earneſt ſupplication, added, "My dear, dear Lord, let me beg, let me conjure you, not

to refuſe me the favour I am about to aſk. Let us depart to-morrow morning for Dreſden, to relieve Matilda; I burn to be acquainted, to live with her, to give her conſolation, and, I hope, happineſs. Only read her letter again, and you cannot have the leaſt heſitation. She is now, perhaps, in tears, is this moment in diſtreſs, when I am ſo happy; and I myſelf am the cauſe of her affliction! And have I, then, dear Matilda, have I robbed thee of thy lover, and deprived thee of thy brother? Oh! how many wrongs have I done thee! No, no, never, never ſhall I be truly at eaſe, till I ſee thee as bleſt as I myſelf am." Caroline ſpoke with ſo much energy, her eyes and features expreſſed ſo well her ſenſations, and ſhe herſelf was ſo beautiful, that Walſtein fell involuntarily on his knee before her, where he long remained with

his lips fixed on her hand, without the power to anſwer a word—" Tell me, my Lord," added ſhe, with earneſtneſs, " ſhall we, are we to depart to-morrow ?"

" Lovely, adorable Caroline !" cried the Count, " how well thou knoweſt my heart ! My abſence from my ſiſter, and the apprehenſion that ſhe may be unhappy, were the only things that could poſſibly interrupt my preſent felicity; but to leave you, Caroline, or to propoſe a journey in the depth of winter, and during ſuch ſevere weather, was more than I could undertake."

" Nay, my Lord, now you ſurely joke. I thought it was always fine weather when one went in ſearch of a friend in the company of a lover. We ſhall paſs through Potſdam: ſhall you ſee the King ?"

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"By all means, my love; it is a duty I cannot neglect; and, if I might venture, I would aſk, in my turn, whether Caroline would"——Caroline perfectly underſtood the Count, and bluſhed; ſhe had not ſeen the King ſince the day of her nuptials, which was now above a year; and, feeling how much cauſe he had to be diſſatisfied with her conduct, ſhe trembled at the thought of being preſented. While ſhe was laſt at Berlin, her mourning and her health were ſufficient pretexts to obtain delay, and the Count, we have ſeen, had his reaſons for wiſhing to indulge her in this delay. At preſent, he perceived her inquietude, and ſtopped ſhort; but ſhe, immediately recovering herſelf, anſwered, with an enchanting ſmile, "It is high time, my Lord, is it not, I ſhould no longer remain ſo childiſh?——Well, lead me, take me to him; I will kneel at his feet; I

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe he will ſcold me; he will do very right; for I have well deſerved his anger; but, when he has ended, I, however, will ſcold him in my turn."

"You! my angel."

"Yes, I; and very ſeverely, too, for having ſigned that dreadful paper, this morning."

Each word Caroline uttered tranſported the Count with happineſs and love, even to intoxication, diſpelling every ſhadow of remaining doubt, if doubt might remain after the frank and natural manner in which ſhe had ſpoken of Lindorf, and her deſire to ſee him and Matilda united. But, no, Walſtein had no doubts; the ingenuous and affectionate Caroline knew not diſſi-

mulation; ſhe expreſſed her feelings too forcibly, and with a conviction that deceit cannot aſſume. Had ſhe been ſilent, indeed, her eyes, her ſmiles, the pleaſure painted in her countenance, would all have ſpoken: her lips knew not falſehood, and her features were the organs of a pure and angelic ſoul. When Caroline ſaid *I love*, no proteſtations, no vows, were wanting; and this ſhe had ſaid ſo often, during the courſe of that fortunate, that bliſsful day, that the Count might well remain perſuaded of her truth.——They ſupped on the kid that Juſtin had killed ſo a-propos; for the Count, when he ſet off in the morning, was too deeply afflicted to think of food; and this ſimple repaſt was the moſt delicious either of them had ever made. Our hiſtory does not inform us whether long habit made the Count, as

uſual, leave Caroline's apartment after ſupper; the reader muſt, therefore, ſuppoſe what he pleaſes on that ſubject: but, in the morning, Caroline made the Count promiſe they ſhould ſoon return to this charming eſtate; "for," added ſhe, with a ſoftened voice and downcaſt eyes, "I ſhall love it as long as I live!"

In proportion as they drew near to Potſdam, the fears of Caroline augmented; this the Count perceived, and endeavoured to inſpire her with fortitude. He related a thouſand traits of the King's goodneſs to him, "who," ſaid he, "is more than my King, he is my friend. Yes, dear Caroline, it is to my friend I am going to preſent one who will make life a continued dream of felicity, and one whom I received from himſelf. Had you heard him yeſterday morning, how long he perſiſted to refuſe the

cruel favour I came to beg, and when, a laſt, he yielded to my perſecutions an ſigned that fatal paper, had you ſeen him return it to me, you would have no fears "Reflect, think again, dear Walſtein," ſai he. "I am truly grieved at your determi nation. I wiſhed to make you happy, an ſtill I think you might be ſo; it is with in finite regret I have ſigned the paper, and ſincerely hope you will make no uſe of it. Such, Caroline, is the monarch who ſoo is to be a witneſs of the felicity of hi friend."

By this time they were in the court o the palace, and the Count, alighting, le Caroline in the carriage. The King, ac cording to his cuſtom, was mounting h horſe to ride round the fort and exerci his troops. He perceived Walſtein an ſtopped——"Ah! are you there, Count!

Sa

ſaid he; "I am glad to ſee you; I thought of you all yeſterday, and, though I ſaw the High Chamberlain, did not mention a word of what has paſſed. Do not be raſh, let me, myſelf, ſpeak to Caroline. I ſcarcely can conſent"———

"My gracious Sovereign, ſhe is here!"

"Who?"

"Caroline! My wife! My lovely, my adored wife! The wife your Majeſty beſtowed on me, and who is now more beloved, more dear than ever!"

"Are you in your ſenſes, Walſtein?"

"Perfectly, Sir; it was yeſterday morning that I was frantic; but Caroline has reſtored me to reaſon, life, and bliſs! She

loves me, wiſhes to be mine, and once more I throw myſelf at your Majeſty's feet to beg her as the greateſt of all bleſſings your royal bounty could grant!"

Yes, the Count was kneeling to the King; who, himſelf, not perfectly underſtanding how a woman might be the cauſe of all this delirium, laughed, bade him "riſe and explain." The Count obeyed; related the deſpair of Caroline, her arrival at Walſtein, their preſent intended journey to Dreſden, for which he now aſked the King's permiſſion, and, afterwards, earneſtly entreated his Majeſty's confirmation of their union before their departure. Both were willingly granted, and the Monarch himſelf went up to Caroline, who was ſtill waiting in her carriage till the Count's return. She was a great deal affected at ſeeing the King approach, and would have

deſcended

deſcended from the coach, but the King ſaid to her, "Stay where you are, Lady Walſtein, ſtay where you are; all is well; forget what is paſt. I am ſatisfied, live happy, and let me have as many ſubjects as poſſible like yourſelves. Walſtein, make no delay, depart, return as ſoon as you can, and bring with you the lovely Matilda." His Majeſty then took the Count by the hand, ſaluted Caroline, and left them both exceedingly moved by his benevolent condeſcenſion, a favor Kings are ſo ſeldom diſpoſed to beſtow. They ſet off immediately for Berlin, made preparations for their journey, and were ſoon on their road to Dreſden, anticipating the mutual pleaſure the meeting with Matilda would occaſion. The Count foreſaw many difficulties which might ariſe from his aunt and young de Zaſtrow, but was deter-

mined to overcome them all, and bring Matilda to Berlin. He concealed his fears from Caroline, whoſe hopes ran high and happineſs was great, in thinking ſhe ſhould gain a ſiſter and a friend. We have before related how deſirous ſhe was of a bleſſing ſo neceſſary and ſo precious; and to have the ſiſter of Walſtein for this friend, with whom ſhe might converſe, while he was abſent, of all her paſt and preſent feelings, certain of being heard with an intereſt almoſt equal to her own, was to double this bleſſing.

To love is not ſufficient; friendſhip, to whom love may unboſom itſelf, is alſo neceſſary; and Caroline, already, felt the delicious tranſports of telling Matilda how dearly ſhe loved her brother. In this their [illegible]ience, for the Count was as deſirous

as

as Caroline of being at Dreſden, they travelled the two firſt days with all poſſible ſpeed, making no ſtay, by day, except to change horſes, and at night only taking two or three hours repoſe. But the ſtrength of Caroline by no means equalled her wiſhes, and the ſecond evening ſhe found herſelf ſo fatigued ſhe was obliged, when they came to a ſmall village, to entreat the Count would go no farther that night. Walſtein, it may well be ſuppoſed, readily conſented; but, ſuſpecting the accommodations would not be very good, he ſent a ſervant before to procure a bed. At laſt, they were met, at the end of the village, by the ſervant, and the landlord of a ſmall, indifferent inn. Our hoſt, judging, by the attendants, his gueſts were great people, and fearing to loſe the promiſed harveſt, came himſelf, to make it

the more ſecure. He had only two bed-chambers, each with two beds, and both theſe were in the poſſeſſion of a young gentleman and his lady, who had arrived the evening before. The huſband had a wound in his arm, which, by the motion of the carriage, had been opened; and this was likely to detain him ſome days longer; for which reaſon, to make certain of the two chambers, he had paid for them before-hand. This, however, did not much em-barraſs our hoſt, who was a merry, un-poliſhed, country fellow.

"I warrant me," ſaid he, "they will let you have one of the chambers, for what occa-ſion have they for two? They are ſo loving, and ſo handſome, that they are never aſunder all day; and why may they not as well be together all night? No, no; they *will not be* vexed at that."

The

The hoſt kept talking till they came to the inn, but the Count, however, thought it neceſſary to go himſelf, and entreat the ſtrangers to ſuffer the Counteſs to lie in one of the beds. Meanwhile the hoſteſs ſhewed Caroline into her own chamber. The Count went up a dark ſtair-caſe, and wanted the landlord to introduce him; but he, little uſed to the forms of good breeding, led him into a kind of entry, at the far end of which was a door open, and, telling the Count he would find them there, left him to introduce himſelf.

Walſtein advanced, and ſaw a young lady, at the farther part of the chamber, elegantly dreſſed, and tying a black ſcarf round the neck of a young gentleman, ſo as to ſupport his arm. As her white and charming hand paſſed his cheek he em-

ployed his other arm to ſeize and kiſs it with rapture. The picture was intereſting, and the Count durſt not diſturb the young couple, whom he ſilently beheld, remembering his own happineſs. Fearing to be thought rude, after ſtanding a moment, he was going to retire; but the young lady, happening to look towards the door, ſaw him, gazed for a moment, flew to him with open arms, and, with aſtoniſhment in her countenance, exclaimed, "It is my brother! my dear dear brother!"

Lindorf (Yes! it was Lindorf himſelf!) forgot his wound, and inſtantly roſe—— "Heavens! Is it poſſible! Can it be Walſtein?"——Walſtein it was, and Lindorf preſſed him to his boſom; while Matilda, hanging round his neck, kiſſed and kiſſed, and knew not whether to weep or dance for joy.

Need we ſay the Count was aſtoniſhed?—Matilda and Lindorf! His ſiſter and his friend both in his arms! Had his ſenſes refuſed belief his heart would have convinced him it was truth; and, though unable to comprehend by what miracle he might find two ſuch people in ſuch a place, he, nevertheleſs, yielded to all the tranſport the prodigy inſpired. For ſome time, Lindorf! Matilda! Brother! Siſter! Friend! Interjections and exclamations only were uttered, only were heard—The Count added the name of Caroline, and, at length, ſaid, "ſhe is here, dear Matilda, here, with me, let us go to her."

"Here! Caroline here! My ſiſter here!" cried Matilda.

Light and ſwift as the young greyhound at his returning maſter's voice, Matilda flies down ſtairs and already is in the arms

of Caroline, who, preſently, knew her; more, indeed, from her affectionate careſſes, and the repeated epithet of "dear dear ſiſter," than from the portrait of Lindorf. The gentlemen followed, and the ſurpriſe of Caroline increaſed; but ſurpriſe and pleaſure of the pureſt nature were her only ſenſations. Lindorf is her brother, and her friend, and ſhe heſitates not to kiſs him with that frank and natural tenderneſs by which true and ſimple friendſhip ſo well is characterized. "And may I, then, call you brother?" ſaid ſhe; "may I tell you I love you? Oh! yes, I know not how much I ſhall love the huſband of my dear Matilda, and the friend of my dear, dear, dear Walſtein!"

This open ingenuous manner would have taught Lindorf, had he himſelf been inſenſible of, his duty. He certainly feared

to

to meet Caroline: the ſcenes that had ſo lately paſſed could not be totally obliterated from his imagination; but the manner in which ſhe received him, the tone of voice in which ſhe uttered thoſe few words, in the preſence of Walſtein and Matilda, wholly deprived him of all dread, either of himſelf or her. He was ſurpriſed to find that the redoubted Caroline was no more than the wife of his friend, and the ſiſter of Matilda; and for whom he felt no ſenſations beyond theſe tranquil and legitimate bounds—"Yes," anſwered he, with fortitude and enthuſiaſm, "yes, Caroline, I am your brother, your friend, the friend of Walſtein, and I feel myſelf worthy of theſe titles, which are become ſo dear, ſo ineſtimable!" Then, ſeizing the hand of Matilda—"Dear Count," ſaid he, "you invited me to return, and promiſed *me happineſs.* Here, as the ultimate happineſs

pineſs to which I aſpire, let me receive this hand, which once was promiſed me from my Walſtein: I think my future life will prove I know its value."

The Count was not long in conſidering an anſwer, and his reply was accompanied with an earneſt wiſh to hear what ſtrange circumſtances had united them; if they were yet married; what had occaſioned the wound of Lindorf; where they were going, whence they came; and, in fine, the full explanation of what, at preſent, ſeemed ſo wholly enigmatical. We are not without our hopes that the reader, in ſome degree, participates the Count's curioſity; and that he now imagines himſelf in the ruſtic chamber of a ruſtic inn, in company with four perſons, the moſt happy the earth contained, feeling all that love and ſweet friendſhip can feel, ſeated round an antique

chimney,

chimney, ſpeaking all at once, and each aſking a thouſand queſtions without waiting for a ſingle reply.

And now behold the lovely Matilda weeping and laughing both at once, kiſſing her brother, embracing Caroline, holding out one hand to her dear Lindorf, and then, ſuddenly, with a mighty grave face, and ſerious tone, commanding ſilence! "Yes, ſilence! For one full quarter of an hour, I impoſe ſilence on you all," ſaid ſhe, ſeating herſelf erect; "for, I aſſure you, I am not a little vain of having a ſtory to relate. It is almoſt as ſingular," ſaid ſhe to her brother, "as the fine tales you uſed to tell me when I was a very little, little girl."—Silence being thus obtained, and the eyes of the company fixed on Matilda, ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to the Count, thus began.

"There

"There was a bird-catcher"——

"A bird-catcher!" exclaimed they all at once.

"Yes, a bird-catcher," replied ſhe, with great gravity. "Before I begin my hiſtory I firſt intend to relate a little fable and put a queſtion to my brother. Do not be impatient, I ſhall ſoon have done—There was once a bird-catcher who, by his tricks and artifices, enticed a poor little bird into his nets. Ah! how wretched was that poor little bird! How did it beat its wings in its confinement, and call all its friends to its aſſiſtance! But the bird-catcher took care not one of them ſhould hear its cries. At laſt came a linnet, and flew round the net in which it was entangled. "Poor little bird," ſaid the linnet, "thou wouldeſt lament

ſtill

ſtill louder if thou kneweſt all the miſchief that awaits thee. To-morrow they will clip thy wings, for ever deprive thee of thy liberty, ſhut thee up in a cage with a bird thou doſt not love, and for ever prevent thy meeting the mate thou haſt left at freedom in the groves." Then did the little bird, at hearing this, cry ſtill louder; and the linnet was ſo moved that it ſaid, "Let us try if there are no means to ſave thee." Whereupon they both began to peck at the threads of the net, and, crack, by and by, one of them was broken; ſo that the little bird got firſt its head out, next one of its wings, at laſt both, ſpread them, vaulted aloft in air, and flew, right joyous, again to find its friends and former happineſs.

"And now tell me, dear brother, whe-

ther

ther was the bird-catcher, who thus tried to deprive the poor little bird of its liberty, or the poor little bird, that endeavoured to regain this liberty, wrong?"

"The bird-catcher," my dear girl cried the Count, enchanted at the art ſimplicity, and grace, ſhe had mingled i her apologue. "The charming little bir will never be wrong if it appeals to me for I am certain my heart will approve wha even my reaſon may condemn."

Matilda, inſtantly, claſped the neck Walſtein, and, with tears of joy, exclaime "I have found my brother; he is ſtill th ſame, ever benevolent and ever good, an I no longer dread either his reproaches my own. Surely, I did right in quittir thoſe malicious people who made me dou his friendſhip."

"Dou

"Doubt my friendſhip! Dear Matilda, let me beg you to explain your meaning."

"Yes," continued ſhe, with vivacity, "they have had the cruelty to ſay, nay even to prove, you no longer loved me, wrote to me no longer, and would ſee me no more: that you forbad me to think of Lindorf, commanded me to marry the Baron de Zaſtrow, had departed for Ruſſia, and, in fact, that I had no longer any brother, for it was the ſame thing."

Matilda could not proceed, and the tears ran down her lovely roſy cheeks; yet, while ſhe wept ſhe ſmiled: it was a ſummer ſhower which refreſhens nature and inſpires new pleaſure.

"What a child am I!" ſaid ſhe; "I knew

knew it was all falſe; I enjoy your c
pany, here you are, you love me, an
you ſee the ſuppoſition makes me w
but no, I will laugh; and now—there,
will I relate the full and whole hiſto
the poor little bird."

Before ſhe began, the Count aſkee
veral queſtions concerning what they
told her againſt him, and found his
had intercepted and concealed the lett
which he had promiſed his ſiſter ſoo
come to Dreſden, and ſet her free.
managed ſo as to make Matilda believ
Count had written to her, his aunt.
wiſh that ſhe might marry the Baro
Zaſtrow was changed into a poſitive c
mand, and the voyage of Lindorf into I
land was a love affair, and a project of

h an Engliſh lady. The lett

the Count, inſtead of Ronebourg, was dated at Peterſburg; and the innocent Matilda, being ſhewn her brother's hand-writing, was the dupe of all theſe artifices. The arrival of the Count, it is true, would ſoon undeceive her; but they hoped to have Matilda married before that happened, and, ſince the Count had wiſhed, he certainly would eaſily be brought to pardon the marriage.

Had Matilda been of a leſs determined character her aunt would, no doubt, have obtained her end; but ſhe found an oppoſition, a fortitude which nothing could ſhake. It ſeemed inconceivable to young de Zaſtrow; for never, till then, had he ſuppoſed it poſſible to reſiſt the elegance, the graces, and the charms he had acquired in his travels. A year's reſidence

at

at Paris, his acquaintance with certain noble and faſhionable gameſters there, and his ſucceſs with actreſſes, who had made moſt heavy demands on his purſe, had ſo fully convinced him of his irreſiſtible merit, that he had imagined nothing more was neceſſary, in order to conquer, than to appear. To his aunt he left the care of courtſhip, and thought Matilda had every right to yield when he had declared, upon his honour, ſhe was as handſome as an angel; that her ſhape was quite charming; that there was ſomething of a French caſt in her countenance; that ſhe was almoſt as deſirable as Mademoiſelle du Thé, of the Opera houſe; that ſhe ſung nearly as well as Mademoiſelle du Gazon, of the *Theâtre Italien*; and that, when ſhe was his wife, he would incontinently take her to Paris, where there was no doubt but ſhe would

ſtrike.

ſtrike. All which he ſaid looking at himſelf in the glaſs, admiring his leg, diſplaying the brilliant on his finger, and, occaſionally, interrupting himſelf to expatiate on the merits of certain faſhionable baubles he had brought from France.

"Such," ſaid Matilda, "is the being with whom my aunt is ſo enraptured; to whom ſhe was determined to marry me; and of whoſe perſon, wit, and paſſion, ſhe was continually vaunting. I own that, for my part, I could ſee nothing but a very fair complexioned, very mincing, very delicate, very vain, very ſelf-ſufficient young gentleman; who loved only one perſon in the whole world, himſelf, and who only did me the honour to think of me becauſe I was the ſiſter of the King's favourite, and the heireſs of Madam de Zaſtrow. I by

no means endeavoured to conceal m thoughts, concerning either him or Lindor from my aunt; ſhe well knew I diſlike the one as much as I loved the other, an her whole endeavour was to make me re verſe this manner of thinking.—" Yo ſee," ſaid ſhe, " your brother has change his opinion."—" Yes, madam," anſwere I, " but his opinion has not changed m heart."—" Your Lindorf no longer love you"—" And muſt I puniſh myſelf fo his infidelity?"—"You will never ſee him again."—" I may love him, nevertheleſs and keep my promiſe."—" But his incon- ſtancy releaſes you"—" Not in the leaſt; his inconſtancy releaſes himſelf, but if I am not inconſtant is that my fault? Or can he, or you, or I myſelf, or any other being in the world, make me forget to love him and teach me to love another?" (What did Lindorf feel as thus Matilda ſpoke?)

"Theſe converſations uſually ended in ill-humour. I was, by turns, ſcolded, careſſed, flattered, and menaced; and, notwithſtanding all my firmneſs, was almoſt driven to deſpair. At length, I determined to write; not to you, brother, for I ſuppoſed you ſtill in Ruſſia, and they might have married me again and again before I could receive your anſwer; beſide I was ſomewhat piqued at your neglect and ſilence; therefore, I ſay, once more, not to you but—to Lindorf I wrote."

"To Lindorf! In England! How did you know his addreſs?"

"Know! I knew not, perfectly, if he were there; for I ſometimes would flatter myſelf they had been telling me falſehoods; though many circumſtances led me to

think he was, and I wrote. Writing was a momentary eaſe and conſolation, and, though my letter remained in my pocket-book after it was written, I ſtill imagined myſelf leſs unhappy. I had ſome ſmall hopes of diſcovering if Lindorf really were in England, and, perhaps, of remitting him this letter, and you ſhall hear on what theſe hopes were founded.

"When I arrived at Dreſden, Mademoiſelle de Manteul, an amiable girl, but ſomewhat older than I, had been exceedingly polite to me, and the intimacy of the family at my aunt's occaſioned me to ſee her often. She long had loſt her mother, and lived with an old gouty father and younger brother; therefore, enjoyed a liberty which rendered her houſe and acquaintance exceedingly agreeable, and ſhe

was,

was, continually, either with me or inviting me to viſit her.

" Flattered by the friendſhip of a young lady of five and twenty, I returned her politeneſs, and we became as familiar as circumſtances would permit. Somewhat timid, on account of the difference of our age, which ſhe, however, endeavoured to make me forget, I, though moſt deſirous of a confidante, durſt not tell her the ſecret of my heart. She had a kind of—of forwardneſs in her manner, owing to her education, and was, likewiſe, moſt intimate with my aunt, to whom ſhe aſſiduouſly paid her court; beſide which ſhe had an evident partiality in favour of the Baron de Zaſtrow, ſo that I feared making an additional enemy, inſtead of a friend. I could with much greater eaſe have confided my

thoughts to her brother, whoſe age was nearer my own, and whoſe mild yet manly character might render him more indulgent; but he, alſo, was the friend of the young Baron, and, indeed, rather ſeemed to avoid than to ſeek being alone with me, and it was not long before he informed us he was going to travel for ſome years.

"Oh! how did my heart palpitate when I heard England was to be the firſt country he viſited! How then did I wiſh to tell him my ſecret, entreat him to ſeek out Lindorf, and conjure him to take charge of my letter! But no opportunity could I find. He was too buſy in preparing for his departure, and ſeemed ſorrowful at being obliged to leave Dreſden and his family. I ſeldom ſaw him, and, when I did, found myſelf abaſhed. If ever I approached,

with

with intent to ſpeak of his voyage to England, and to add a word relative to what lay neareſt to my heart, I trembled, knew not what to ſay, and remained ſilent; bluſhing as if I had ſpoken, or as if the whole world had read my thoughts. Mademoiſelle de Manteul was generally a third perſon, and, ſeeing my embarraſſment, increaſed it by her pleaſantries.

"At length, this brother departed, while I ſtill was ſeeking the means to induce him to take my letter and give it to Lindorf; and I was left in the utmoſt deſpair at having miſſed ſo favourable an opportunity.

"One reſource ſtill remained; my friend might ſend it to her brother. But then it was neceſſary to make a full confeſſion, and

intereſt her in the ſucceſs of my paſſ
The better to lead to this I continu
ſpoke of England, her brother, the let
ſhe would receive from him, and the
pleaſure of having a correſpondence wi
perſon one loves, though I yet had
dared to pronounce the name of Lind
She came to me one morning, and th
a letter into my lap. "There," ſaid
"you who think it ſo ſweet a pleaſur
receive letters; I make you a preſen
that, which, indeed, ought to have b
addreſſed to you; for my brother, tho
he has written to me, has ſpoken onl
you."

"Of me!"

"Yes, of you, little witch. You are
cauſe of his abſence, you have robbed

of my brother; read, read, and return it quickly."

"Nothing of what this meant could I comprehend; but, beginning to read, was ſoon better inſtructed. The poor youth had ſpoken to his ſiſter of ſentiments which I neither ſuſpected nor could return, and for which I was much afflicted, and, therefore, would not have read beyond the firſt page. But, Oh! what a pleaſure was I about to deprive myſelf of! My friend obliged me to go on, and I turned over with vexation and ſorrow. Scarcely had I caſt my eyes on the ſecond page before I ſaw, at the bottom, a name!—a name!—Oh! how inſtantly did grief give way to pleaſure, to joys the moſt ecſtatic! It was the name ſo dear to my heart, ſo ever preſent to my thoughts; yes, it was the name

of Lindorf; *the Baron of Lindorf, Captain of the Guards.*

"No deception is there; it is he, he himſelf, and already have I read every ſyllable, have uttered a hundred exclamations, have preſſed the letter to my lips, to my boſom, and have wept and laughed as if I had had no witneſs of my raptures, folly, and frenzy. Looking up, however, and ſeeing the aſtoniſhed air of Mademoiſelle de Manteul, I ran into her arms, and hid my emotion in her boſom. Gently raiſing, ſhe aſked me what it meant. "Matilda!" ſaid ſhe; "my dear Matilda! Why are you thus overjoyed? What is it that thus can agitate you?"

"Ah! read, read—read yourſelf," ſaid I, pointing to a certain paſſage in the letter;

letter; "this will be my explanation;" and while ſhe read, again I hid my face in her boſom.

"I have had the happineſs," ſaid M. de Manteul to his ſiſter, "to meet with the "Baron of Lindorf, at Hamburg, a cap- "tain of the Pruſſian guards, and hope "we ſhall become intimate friends. We "have been ſhipmates together, and lodge "in the ſame houſe. We are ſeldom "aſunder, our tempers and diſpoſitions "accord wonderfully, for he, like me, is "melancholy, apt to be abſent, and re- "grets his country. Without being his "confidant, I dare pronounce his heart is "not more free than mine."

"Ah!" exclaimed I, raiſing my head and joining my hands, "it is not true,

then, that he loves an Engliſh lady, or that he has been ſix months married! My heart told me it was not!"

"But who, who are you ſpeaking of? Do you know this Baron of Lindorf?"

"Do I know him!"

"Ay, do you know him? Do you love him?"

"Love him! Better than life! Beyond all thought!"

"And thus, from queſtion to queſtion, Mademoiſelle de Manteul became the confidante of all my ſecrets, and fully informed of my ſituation. I related your friendſhip, my dear brother, with Lindorf,

dorf, and your deſire to ſee us united, but, as one muſt always reſerve a little of one's wealth for one's ſelf, I did not tell her that you had changed your opinion; though I let her know my doubts and fears concerning Lindorf, which her ſilence ſeemed to confirm. Yet was it poſſible, and I endeavoured to perſuade myſelf it was true, that the difficulty of conveying his letters to me was the reaſon why I received none. My brother was no longer in his intereſt; he, no doubt, knew it, and that *melancholy*, that *abſent air*, his *regrets for his country*, and his *enſlaved heart*, had each made its impreſſion, and re-animated all my hopes.

"My friend had liſtened with an evident concern, and, when I had ended, affectionately kiſſing me, ſaid, "My poor, dear

dear Matilda, why did you not tell me all this ſooner? How great would have been the pleaſure of the confidence you have refuſed me!"

"I feared leſt you ſhould take the part of young de Zaſtrow."

"Me! Oh, no!—So far from that I perfectly approve your reſiſtance, and am only afraid leſt you ſhould yield at laſt."

"Never! Never!—While I live, never will I love man but Lindorf!"

"Add, alſo, none other you ought to love; for, in reality, you are as much betrothed as if actually married, and to eſpouſe another would be guilt, perjury."

"It would, it would!"

"But what is Lindorf doing in England?"

"Alas! I know not; cannot comprehend. I have not heard from him these ſix months!"

"And why do you not write?"

"I have written."

"And where is your letter?"

"In my pocket-book."

"Mademoiſelle de Manteul burſt into a laugh. "It muſt produce wonderful effects," ſaid ſhe, "while it remains there. Oh! what a child you are! Give me your letter,

letter, and your lover ſhall have it in a week."—How did I kiſs Mademoiſelle de Manteul!—And yet her brother's love of me ſomewhat damped my joy; though I admired his ſiſter's goodneſs, thus to ſacrifice his intereſts to mine. I was even fearful of abuſing it, and ſhewed ſome heſitation.—" The taſk," ſaid ſhe, " I own, is a little cruel; but we muſt cure him, and this I think will be an infallible means. Give me the letter."—And ſoon the letter was taken from my pocket-book and in her hand: It was ſealed.—" You poſitively promiſe, my friend," ſaid ſhe, as ſhe received it, " to be only Lindorf's; never to marry de Zaſtrow?"

" Poſitively! Poſitively!"

" Very well, that will ſet my conſcience at eaſe; for I now ſhall be ſerving a perſecuted,

ſecuted, married pair. Leave the manage-ment of every thing to me. We muſt gain time till you can receive an anſwer, and take care to leave me with the young Baron as often as poſſible. I will flatter and coax him, and thus relieve you from the pain of practiſing deceit."

"Oh! I cannot deceive. I have al-ways told him, and always ſhall tell him, I will love none but Lindorf."

"And what is his anſwer?"

"That he has no faith in eternal con-ſtancy."

"He has not! I underſtand him. But we will prove what women are capable of; ſhall we not, my dear Matilda?"

"I muſt

"I moſt ſincerely promiſed we would, and left her, more than ever determined on unſhaken conſtancy and reſiſtance."

Walſtein here ſmiled, and whiſpered ſomething to Lindorf, which the latter returned with like ſignificance. The ladies, and eſpecially Matilda, deſired to know what they ſaid.—"Oh! I promiſe you, you ſhall know by and by; but go on, my dear girl, with your ſtory. You were telling us of the tender friendſhip of Mademoiſelle de Manteul."—"I was," replied Matilda, with ardour; "and never, perhaps, was friendſhip like hers; as you would have ſaid, had you heard her ſpeak, ſeen her eagerneſs, and her zeal. You would have ſuppoſed the ſecret hers, and that her happineſs, not mine, was at ſtake. Every means did ſhe take

to-

to increaſe my fortitude. I might, perhaps, have ſuſpected myſelf; but my friend was five and twenty, was therefore prudent, and, certainly, would not give me ill counſel. Determined, therefore, with all poſſible obſtinacy, not to yield, I waited, but not with dread, for the anſwer of Lindorf; perſuaded he would tell me truth, and, if I found I was no longer beloved, my reſolution was taken."

"Why, what would you have done?" ſaid Caroline, with vivacity.

"Every thing I could to have forgotten him; but, at the ſame time, have kept the vow I made, never to marry, never to truſt a perfidious ſex, capable of loving twice."

This

This was very innocently ſaid, but it was a dagger to the feeling heart of Caroline. She bluſhed exceſſively, caſt her fine eyes on the ground, half looked up at Walſtein, and, as inſtantly, again, looked down. He ſaw her charming confuſion, enjoyed it for a moment, tenderly kiſſed her hand, then, addreſſing himſelf to Lindorf, ſaid, "You, my friend, no doubt, approve Matilda's mode of thinking, and, perhaps, you are right; but each perſon has his opinion. I think nothing can be more flattering than to be the ſecond object of the attachment of a delicate and tender heart; and I ſhould think this attachment more durable, and more certain, than that of a heart that never had occaſion to ſuſpect and be aware of itſelf."

"How!"

"How!" exclaimed Matilda; "does my brother Walſtein preach inconſtancy?"

"I do not think a ſecond paſſion deſerves the name, and I only admit of being twice in love."

"Aha! No oftener?"

"No, certainly; no oftener;" ſaid Caroline, faintly, and preſſing the hand o Walſtein to her boſom.

"Well, for my part," replied Matilda; "I find the firſt time once too often, and that women are very ſilly creatures ever to love, ſince love has ſo many pangs for them and ſo few for the men. Here was this good gentleman amuſing himſelf, in all tranquillity, at London, while

while I was ſcolded, perſecuted, and deſpairing from morning till night——(Lindorf with a look petitioned mercy; Matilda ſmiled and continued.)—I found myſelf, however, much leſs unhappy ſince I had gained a friend, to whom I might tell all my griefs; and this friend was ſo kind, underſtood ſo well all my feelings, approved ſo highly of my love and conſtancy, and ſpoke ſo well of Lindorf, and ſo ill of de Zaſtrow, that my obligations were infinite. Nay ſhe was even complaiſant enough to admit his viſits and endure his converſations, for whole hours, to ſerve me, and adviſed me to invite him to come on thoſe evenings I was to viſit her. "That will be the means of amuſing him and not expoſing yourſelf," ſaid ſhe; "and, likewiſe, of pleaſing your aunt. I promiſe never to leave you; for, indeed,

indeed, there is nothing I would not do to ſerve you."

"My aunt now became very good humoured, teized me no more, and I hoped, thus, to gain time; but it is now three days ſince ſhe brought me two large ſheets of paper, commanded me to read them, ſign which I pleaſed, and left me in utter aſtoniſhment. They ſeemed like two large contracts! And was I then permitted to chuſe between Lindorf and de Zaſtrow? Such for a moment were my hopes; but I ſoon ſaw they both related to the odious de Zaſtrow, whom I hated more and more. One of them was what I had ſuſpected, a marriage contract with him, to which nothing was wanting but my ſignature, and by which I was made heireſs to my aunt. The other was

a deed

a deed of conveyance of this inheritance to the Baron de Zaſtrow, ſhould I refuſe to ſign the firſt. Oh! how happy was I thus to be left to my choice! How inſtantly did I ſign the conveyance, and run with it, joyouſly ſkipping, into my aunt's apartment! Her nephew was with her. "There, there, there!" ſaid I; "it is done; I have ſigned it, moſt willingly." Young de Zaſtrow, as vain and ſelf-ſufficient as ever, had not the leaſt doubt but it was the marriage contract, and, kneeling, returned me a thouſand thanks for my condeſcenſion. "I am quite delighted, Sir," ſaid I, laughing, "to ſee you ſo pleaſed, though, really, you owe me no thanks, I not having the leaſt merit, for I have only followed my own inclinations."

"His tranſports now redoubled, and I *was* malicious enough to repeat, with great ſolemnity,

ſolemnity, "Yes ſir, I aſſure you I have wholly followed my inclination—to remain free—Beſide, my aunt has a right to beſtow her benefactions where ſhe pleaſes; nor have I ever wiſhed to enjoy wealth which ſeems to be put in competition with the greateſt of earthly bleſſings, the right of beſtowing my heart and hand."

"Imagine the look and manner of de Zaſtrow as he roſe.—My aunt ſaw which paper it was I had ſigned, and her eyes ſpoke her feelings; but, before ſhe had time to give them utterance, I fell, and, kiſſing her hands again and again, ſaid, "My dear, dear aunt, do not be angry; every thing is well as it is; neither mention marriage nor an inheritance which I never deſired, nor ever once thought of; only let this contract be deſtroyed; (as I

ſaid this I tore it in a thouſand pieces) leave the deed of gift in the poſſeſſion of my couſin de Zaſtrow; men have more occaſion for riches than we have, and I covet nothing but your friendſhip, the friendſhip of my brother, and the love of Lindorf, or, at leaſt, the liberty of loving him all my life. The Baron de Zaſtrow will find many women who will be proud to be diſtinguiſhed by him, and who will not be in love with Lindorf; who, therefore, might afford him that happineſs I cannot; and, when you ſhould ſee your poor Matilda lying dead of a broken heart, who, then, could reſtore her to you?"

"I thought my aunt ſeemed affected and was about to yield to my entreaties, for ſhe tenderly raiſed me up, preſſed my hand, and, turning towards de Zaſtrow,

ſaid,

ſaid, "you hear her, nephew, what do you think?"—De Zaſtrow was ſtriding furiouſly about the chamber. "Think, madam," anſwered he, with a tragic terror in his voice and features, "I cannot think. Death or Matilda muſt be mine!" At the ſame moment he drew his ſword; yes, I aſſure you, he drew his ſword, and ſeemed determined to kill himſelf. I ſprang to him and ſeized his arm; my aunt cried out like a perſon expiring, and ſaid ſhe was *very very ill!* I knew not which of them to attend, nor could I calm either, till I promiſed to do every thing they pleaſed; while I myſelf was ſo much agitated, and terrified, that I ſcarcely could utter theſe few words, which, however, produced an aſtoniſhing effect. The ſword was in its ſcabbard again, my aunt came to herſelf, kiſſed me, careſſed me,

and earneſtly begged me immediately to ſign.

" Luckily for me, however, I had prevented all ſigning for that night; as the torn contract, ſcattered about the floor, informed them. It was, therefore, deferred till the morrow; but they required me to renew my promiſe. The moment my terror was gone, I ſhuddered at what had paſſed, and at the engagement I had entered into without knowing what I did; and when I was deſired to confirm this engagement I was ſo much affected that I fainted away. They were obliged to carry me into my chamber, and lay me on a bed; the motion ſomewhat brought me to myſelf, for, though I could not ſpeak, I heard what they were ſaying. They thought me ſtill in a fit, and my aunt ſaid to the Baron,

ron, "Do not be alarmed, nephew, this will ſoon be over; we have terrified her a little too much, but the greateſt difficulty is conquered, ſhe has promiſed; to-morrow ſhe ſhall ſign, the next day you ſhall marry her, and her brother may then ſay what he pleaſes. At preſent we muſt leave her undiſturbed"—After which they quitted the chamber, recommending me to the care of my woman.

"Oh! what infinite matter was here for reflection, when I came perfectly to myſelf; which this contributed to effect! I conſidered and re-conſidered every word, nor was there one that did not give either ſurpriſe, anger, fear, grief, and even joy. I preſently diſmiſſed my attendant—*We have terrified her a little too much!* repeated I. And ſo they have been playing a ſcene, in which I have been the dupe of the comedy!

A trick, concerted between my aunt and this ſelf-killing couſin, to obtain my conſent!——I deſpiſed the artifice, and, from that moment, held myſelf free; yet I ſhrunk back with horror when I recollected *She has promiſed; to-morrow ſhe ſhall ſign, and the next day you ſhall marry her*—"No, I will die, firſt," repeated I. What followed gave me a ray of hope. *Her brother may then ſay what he pleaſes——We ſhall no longer fear him.* "So they ſtand in awe of this dear brother, then, whom I thought in the intereſt of my perſecutors, but is not! They have deceived me in that too; and I ſtill have a protector, a friend, who will not forſake me."—Alas! in my joy of having again this friend, this good brother, I forgot how far diſtant we were, and that the next day my fate was to be determined.

"I re-

"I remained thus, agitated by a thouſand different thoughts, when Mademoiſelle de Manteul entered. The moment I ſaw her, I held out my arms, and, weeping, exclaimed, "Oh! come, come to the aſſiſtance of your wretched friend!" Yet little did I imagine all her friendſhip was capable of performing! She was as pale, trembling, and affected as I myſelf—"I know every thing," ſaid ſhe; "I have juſt left your aunt. What have you done, Matilda? You have promiſed to marry de Zaſtrow."

"He was going to kill himſelf."

"Kill himſelf! ſilly girl; men are not ſo ready to kill themſelves. But what do you mean? Do you intend to keep this fatal promiſe? Do you recollect all thoſe you have made to Lindorf?"

"Ah! can you think I have forgot them?" paſſionately anſwered I. "No; they are all engraved on my heart, and ere they are effaced they ſhall tear that heart from my boſom! Yet, what am I to do? How may I free myſelf from this deteſted marriage Speak, tell me, dear friend; can you imagine any means of delay till I write to my brother, till he can return and protect me? For, from what I have juſt heard, that I now am ſure he will. Oh! if he were not in Ruſſia, I know what I would do."

"Why, what would you do?" ſaid Mademoiſelle de Manteul, who ſeemed deep in thought; "what would you do?"

"I would eſcape; fly to him for ſafety."

"And have you the courage?" ſaid ſhe.

"How

"How I admire you, my young friend! This is, in reality, the ſole means left. I myſelf thought of it, but durſt not make the propoſition."

"Alas!" anſwered I, "the thing is impoſſible; my brother is in Ruſſia. I never ſhall find the means of going thither."

"I own it is difficult; but have not you a maternal uncle in London?"

"I have; my Lord Seymour."

"Suppoſe you were to put yourſelf under his protection?"

"What! fly to England and Lindorf there! Can you imagine"——

"No; I ſhould not have imagined that

would have been a reaſon to avoid England."

"Ah! my dear friend," ſaid I, ſhaking my head, "if you have no other propoſal but this to offer I am undone. Rather would I go to Ruſſia, impoſſible as it is, and ſeek an aſylum from my brother, than act with ſuch imprudence. I ſpoke this with ſo firm a tone that ſhe offered no reply, but aſked me what it was *I juſt had heard.* I then repeated my aunt's converſation, and, ſuddenly interrupting me, ſhe exclaimed, "If they have deceived you in one reſpect they may have in another, and, it is my firm opinion, your brother is not in Ruſſia, for I recollect to have heard ſomething as well as you——I will go immediately to your aunt, and, if I am not miſtaken, preſently diſcover the truth. We then ſhall know what we have to do."

"She

"She went, and it was not long before she returned. Pleasure sparkled in her eyes. "I was right in my conjecture," said she, as she entered; "they have imposed upon you; your brother is at Berlin, married to a lovely lady; his letters have been intercepted, he is soon coming to Dresden, but they are determined to marry you, with or without your consent, before his arrival. To-morrow you will be forced to sign the contract; nay, they will even guide your hand, if you will not sign it willingly, and the day following you are to be married. All this has your aunt told me in secresy. "My niece has promised," said she, "and she shall keep her promise."

"Oh! my God! my God!" cried I, "what shall I do? And you tell me these things with apparent pleasure."

"Why, I really thought it would pleaſe you to hear your brother is at Berlin, and that you may, if you pleaſe, free yourſelf from their tyranny."

"Perhaps I might—but"—

"But——What, and is all your courage gone ſo ſuddenly?—Ah! poor Matilda; I perceive you never will have the reſolution to remain firm. Lindorf has got your letter, is returning, or, perhaps, returned; and what will he ſay when he ſhall find you are married?"

"Cruel friend!" replied I, with chagrin; "is this your conſolation?"

"What would you have me ſay to a feeble and timid child, who does not know her own mind? Thoſe evils we want the fortitude

fortitude to rid ourſelves of we muſt endure; and I can aſſure you that, in two days, if you are at Dreſden, you will be the Baroneſs de Zaſtrow."

"Never, never," anſwered I, with enthuſiaſm—"Never ſhall that hated name be mine: I will prove that this feeble and timid child has more reſolution than you ſuſpect; nay, has enough to face even death itſelf."

"Die! Pſhaw! Who would die, when they may live, and live happily?"

"I ſee no means; it is impoſſible. I cannot go by myſelf to Berlin. I ſhould loſe myſelf a thouſand times; neither ſhould I ever have the ſtrength to get thither."

"Mademoiſelle de Manteul could not for-

bear

bear laughing.—" Poor girl! And ſo you thought I meant to ſend you to Berlin, alone, and on foot, a fugitive heroine, in diſguiſe, no doubt, with a bundle in your hand, and a large ſtraw hat tied under your chin, beneath which ſhould be diſcovered a certain dignified and noble air, which ſome piteous ſtage-coachman perceiving ſhould give you a place on the box. This, no doubt, would be vaſtly clever and intereſting, but the way I mean to propoſe is much leſs dangerous and more ſimple. One of my former maids is married to the poſt-maſter of the city. She is entirely devoted to me, and her huſband will not only furniſh a chaiſe and horſes but conduct you himſelf; will accompany you till you get ſafe to your brother, and, if you pleaſe, you may now eſcape, and wait at their houſe till you ſet off. You have your choice to do

this

this or marry de Zaſtrow; for there is no alternative; you muſt determine for the marriage or the elopement; and, if you let the moment ſlip, it will be impoſſible for me to ſerve you."

"My choice is made," ſaid I, inſtantly; "and, ſure, I am moſt fortunate in a friend. I will fly to my brother, who will protect me for my Lindorf——And yet it is a great crime to deceive my aunt."

"Your aunt thinks it none to deceive you, moſt unworthily."

"But ſuppoſe I were to try, once more, to move her"———

"Your trial would be vain. Tears, prayers, perſecutions, and even faintings,

are

are expected, which, far from being moved at, they perhaps will profit by."

"I will be gone," cried I; "neither ſcruples nor remorſe ſhall ſtay me. I am ſhamefully treated, and I have no longer any other inquietude than that which the fear of eſcaping in ſafety gives."

"Nothing is eaſier. Take my gown, cloak, and veil; they will ſuppoſe it me, and leave me to follow you. Wait for me at our houſe, I will preſently be with you."

"Mademoiſelle de Manteul is not very ſcrupulous," ſaid the Count, ſmiling. "You cannot imagine half her zeal," continued Matilda. I myſelf was incapable of either acting or thinking; but ſhe, in a moment, got every thing ready, helped me

to

to put on my diſguiſe, opened the door, kiſſed me, puſhed me forwards, and ſaid, "Go, go, dear Matilda; you have not a moment to loſe: they may be coming here the next minute, perhaps; fly, or farewell all hope." Fear gave me courage, and I had got to the bottom of the ſtaircaſe when I recollected I ought to write a note, and leave it on my table, for my aunt; that ſhe might be certain, at leaſt, I was not dead. I returned, and Mademoiſelle de Manteul, terrified at ſeeing me, thought I had met ſome one on the ſtairs. Scarcely had I begun to tell her what brought me back before ſhe interrupted me. "You are mad," ſaid ſhe; "Write a letter! Give your aunt time to come and catch you! She told me ſhe was coming up preſently——Begone, begone! They are not

not ſo eaſily to be perſuaded people are going to kill themſelves as you are!"

"The fear of being caught made me compliant, and I got out without being perceived. I had not far to go, nor was it long before my friend came to me. "We have a whole hour to take our meaſures in," ſaid ſhe; "they think you are aſleep, and I adviſed them to leave you in peace, at preſent. The firſt thing you have to do, therefore, is to go to the poſt-houſe; for, ſhould they find you abſent, they will come to ſeek you here immediately. You will there remain in ſafety. If you want any money I can aſſiſt you."

"Thanks to your goodneſs, my brother, I did not want this kind of aſſiſtance. My [illegible]herefore, went with me to the miſ-

treſs

treſs of the poſt-houſe, who conſented to every thing ſhe propoſed, and with whom ſhe left me. It was very probable they would come to ſeek me at the houſe of Mademoiſelle de Manteul, and, therefore, neceſſary ſhe ſhould be at home to avoid ſuſpicion.

" No ſooner was I alone than I began to be deeply affected at the terror of my aunt, when ſhe found me gone, and was wholly ignorant what was become of me. Diſobedience and flight were ſufficient offences, and needed not aggravation. I, therefore, reſolved to repair them, as far as was in my power, and, having called for pen, ink, and paper, wrote nearly thus.

" I have juſt been informed, my dear " aunt, my brother is at Berlin, and am

" ſo

" ſo impatient to ſee him that I have gone
" without aſking a permiſſion which, in
" all probability, would have been refuſed,
" and have thus ſpared myſelf the regret
" of a denial and again being diſobedient.
" I am already ſufficiently afflicted for
" having diſpleaſed you by my reſiſtance
" to your will. Ah! why, my dear aunt,
" have you forced me thus to diſpleaſe,
" thus to refuſe compliance, thus to fly
" from you? How happy ſhould I have
" been could I have contributed to your
" felicity! The Baron de Zaſtrow muſt
" have ſufficient delicacy to feel that a pro-
" miſe, extorted by terror and diſowned by
" the heart, is not binding. I hope he
" will no more think of killing himſelf,
" for I am no longer there to catch his
" arm; I would earneſtly adviſe him to
" live

"live, and, above all, to live happy with-
"out Matilda."

"I gave this note in charge to one of the landlady's children, and bade him deliver it to the porter, without ſaying who it came from. More at eaſe, now I thought my aunt would be ſo too, I waited with tolerable patience for Mademoiſelle de Manteul, who had promiſed to ſee me again before I ſet off, and who, at length, came.

"You have not a moment to loſe," ſaid ſhe; "you muſt depart at day-break; the Baron is ſearching you through every houſe in town; he has juſt left ours, and I encouraged him to continue this ſearch, which will give you time to get the ſtart. It was exceedingly lucky you did not write, as your filly whim would have made you."—

I durſt

I durſt not confeſs I juſt had wrote, but I now felt my imprudence, and the fear of being purſued was ſo ſtrong that I was unwilling to go. My friend employed all her eloquence to encourage me; ſhe deſcribed the anger of my aunt, the neceſſity I ſhould be under of confeſſing where I had been, and who had aſſiſted me, the aſcendant which my elopement and return would give her over me; told me there would be no poſſibility of appeaſing but by obeying her, and that, if ever I entered her houſe again, ſhe was certain I ſhould be married within two hours.—"I will go," ſaid I; "I will go inſtantly; the die is caſt, and, be the event what it will, I will go;" and accordingly orders to get the chaiſe and horſes ready were immediately given. Mademoiſelle de Manteul, fearing I again ſhould relapſe, would not leave me. She was

under

under no apprehenſions about her father, whoſe gout kept him at home; ſhe ſent him word that ſhe ſhould ſup out, and remained with me till the moment of departure. Of de Zaſtrow, of my brother, of Lindorf, of every thing that might encourage me to keep my reſolution, ſhe ſpoke. "Depend on me," ſaid ſhe; "I will go, in the morning, to de Zaſtrow, and lead him to ſuſpect you are flown to England. He ſhall not eaſily get away from me, and by that time you will be ſo far on the way to Berlin that all purſuit will be in vain." This gave me a little confidence; or, rather, it was now too late to liſten to fear. To recede was no longer poſſible, and I beheld the moment of departure arrive with pleaſure. Unable to expreſs my gratitude, except by my kiſſes and tears, while my friend was enraptured to ſee me, as ſhe

ſaid,

ſaid, eſcape ſo many dangers, I got into the chaiſe and"——

"Alone!" interrupted the Count.

"No; the miſtreſs of the houſe, who is now with me, and who, formerly, as I ſaid, had ſerved Mademoiſelle de Manteul, whoſe huſband conducted us"——

"But where is Lindorf?" replied the Count, again ſtopping her ſhort. "It ſeems that Mademoiſelle de Manteul, not he, has carried you off."

"And did you think it was Lindorf?"

"I own, I am glad to find it was not; though there ſeems ſomething incomprehenſible in all this!

"A little patience, brother, and you will not hereafter judge of your Matilda from appearances.

"And now, behold me in the poſt-chaiſe, with the good Marianne, for that is her name; eſcorted by her huſband, on horſe-back, ſtopping only to change horſes, toſſing ducats into the poſtillion's hats, and taking each buſh for the Baron de Zaſtrow. My companion did all ſhe could to inſpire courage. Mademoiſelle de Manteul was her oracle, and ſhe, every minute, repeated "there was nothing to fear, for Mademoiſelle had told her ſo." Theſe aſſurances made me more tranquil; and, having travelled the firſt day without interruption, I thought myſelf in perfect ſafety. Juſt, however, as we came yeſterday to the poſt-houſe, I, very imprudently, put my head

out of the carriage, and, preſently, heard a voice, I thought I knew, cry, "It is ſhe! It is ſhe herſelf! Poſtillion! Stop! On your life ſtop!" And I preſently ſaw young de Zaſtrow, at the ſide of the chaiſe, with a thouſand menaces in his countenance."

"De Zaſtrow!" cried the Count and Caroline.

"Yes; De Zaſtrow, and without the help of witchcraft. What, you ſuppoſe ſome malicious fairy has winged him through the air. Nay, to ſay the truth, I ſuppoſed ſo myſelf, at firſt; but, alas! I ſoon found this good for nothing fairy was neither more nor leſs than my own imprudence. The note I had written had indicated the road I ſhould take, and the Ba-

ron had not loſt his time in further ſearch at Dreſden. He ſuppoſed I had, no doubt, written it, in the carriage, and that, by ſetting off immediately, he ſhould eaſily overtake and bring me back; and this ſuppoſition made him depart two or three hours before me. I imagined myſelf purſued, while, on the contrary, I was full ſpeed purſuing, and, unfortunately enough, overtook him at this poſt-houſe, where he was waiting for horſes. How great muſt have been the ſurpriſe of my dear friend, Mademoiſelle de Manteul, when ſhe found, in the morning, he was gone! And how exceſſive her inquietude and fears for me! At preſent, however, I hope ſhe is eaſier."

"Yes, yes," ſaid the Count, ſmiling, "ſhe is eaſy enough, never fear. But go on with your ſtory, it is quite romantic."

"Romantic, indeed! I aſſure you, I think it a very extraordinary ſtory! But we are not half at the end of it yet—Let me ſee—Terror, fright, and conſternation, at the ſight of de Zaſtrow. Yes, yes; I was there—Well, then: I ſhrieked, and hid myſelf in a corner of the chaiſe, while Marianne ſcreamed to the poſtillion to go on; de Zaſtrow threatened and bade him ſtop, his ſervants came up, and the crowd increaſed. Something muſt be done, and I thought it beſt to ſpeak to the Baron, to aſk him by what right he interrupted me, or pretended to deprive me of my liberty, and to tell him, openly, I would rather die than either marry him or return to Dreſden. Accordingly I again looked out of the chaiſe, and there I ſaw!—

"Now, if you pleaſe, you may talk of witchcraft,

witchcraft, fairies, and romances; any thing, or every thing, you can ſuppoſe miraculous and inconceivable; for there did I ſee—Lindorf! Yes, Lindorf himſelf; who, inſtead of in England, was there, beſide the chaiſe, as much aſtoniſhed as myſelf. Matilda!—Lindorf!—Theſe exclamations were mutual and inſtantaneous, and I really believed heaven had ſent him to my ſuccour; therefore, leaping out of the chaiſe—

"I cannot go on," ſaid Matilda, "you muſt finiſh the ſtory, Lindorf; you know the remainder better than I do." Then, with her head reclined on the ſhoulder of Caroline, ſhe whiſpered, "I hope he will not tell how I ſprang into his arms and claſped him in mine with all my ſtrength."

"Aye, aye, let me conjure thee, dear Lindorf, to go on," ſaid the Count, impatiently; "prithee, explain by what ſtrange chance thou cameſt, juſt at that preciſe moment, on the Dreſden road, and in company with the Baron de Zaſtrow."

"I had returned," ſaid Lindorf, "to anſwer, in perſon, the charming, the tender letter I had received at London. My being there at this moment was accidental, but I was not in company with the Baron de Zaſtrow. It was chance, or, rather, my guardian genius that brought me to the poſt-houſe juſt then. I was unacquainted with the Baron, but I ſaw a young man of quality, impatient to obtain horſes, and quite furious becauſe none were to be found. He inquired, at the ſame time, if a young lady, whom he endea-

endeavoured to deſcribe, had not lately paſſed that road. They anſwered, no, and he again began to ſwear it was falſe, ſhe muſt have paſſed; and again to beſtow his curſes on the poſtillions and the poſt-maſter. As ſoon as I alighted from my chaiſe, for I was going to Dreſden, he came up, and ſaid, "you, certainly, Sir, muſt have met a young lady, alone, very handſome, driving full ſpeed!"

"No, Sir, I aſſure you, I met no ſuch lady; nor, indeed, any lady, that I remember."

"This is very extraordinary!" ſaid he, ſtamping—"Perhaps the note was a new trick!—Excuſe me, Sir, for queſtioning you ſo abruptly. I am purſuing a woman I adore, who promiſed me her hand yeſterday,

was to have married me to-day, and who eloped laſt night!"

"The misfortune is the greater," anſwered I, "Sir, becauſe you do not ſeem that kind of perſon the ladies would fly." My compliment ſeemed to pleaſe him, and acquired me his entire confidence. He bowed, and, with much ſelf-ſufficiency, which he endeavoured to render modeſt, replied, "I own, Sir, it is not the firſt time I have been told ſo; and there have been ladies who have gone farther than telling; but you ſee how different taſtes are; and, certainly, that of women is very often very capricious. Is it not quite extraordinary that her I am purſuing is yet not eighteen; and that, notwithſtanding, ſhe has a whim of romantic fidelity for a lover who has forſaken her, and whom

ſhe

ſhe will never ſee again? I am unacquainted with him, but ſhould ſuppoſe perſonal accompliſhments not *infinitely* in his favour; and, as to birth and fortune, in theſe I yield to no man."

"All this, Sir, I make no doubt, is true; but if your rival has the advantage of being beloved"—

"Beloved, or not beloved," ſaid he, "it is equal to me; he is abſent, will ſee her no more; if I can overtake her, ſhe is mine, and ſhall be obliged to adore me."

"This converſation paſſed before the poſt-houſe, and I was amazed at the facility with which this indiſcreet and vain young man ſpoke to a ſtranger, as well as at his total want of delicacy, and ſilently approved the

fugitive lady. Juſt then a chaiſe came up, full gallop, from Dreſden, and interrupted us. He did not ſeem to have the leaſt ſuſpicion, and looked towards it from mere curioſity, till, the chaiſe ſtopping, a lady looked out. I had but a glimpſe, and did not know it was Matilda, but my gentleman, inſtantly, exclaimed, "It is ſhe! It is ſhe!" While the lady drew back, exclaiming, in her turn, "It is he!" The maid bade the poſtillion drive on, while de Zaſtrow, with uplifted cane, threatened to knock him off his horſe if he moved a ſtep. I heſitated, for a moment, what part I ſhould take. The frankneſs of the youth had, in ſome meaſure, laid me under an obligation; and yet I felt myſelf affected for the unfortunate lady, whom they were going to marry againſt her conſent. My firſt intention was to become a mediator,

if

if poſſible, and to inſpire the terrified lady with fortitude, for which purpoſe I approached the chaiſe, far from imagining how deeply I myſelf was intereſted in this adventure. As I came up I heard my own name repeated in an accent of amazement! The door opened, and out flew Matilda, whom I inſtantly knew, notwithſtanding the finiſhed beauty, alteration, and growth, of her perſon! The charming Matilda placed herſelf by my ſide, took me by the hand, and ſaid, in a voice which terror and joy had rendered faint, "Dear, dear Lindorf! God has ſurely ſent you to the aſſiſtance and defence of your Matilda! They want to rob you of her, but they never never ſhall! She will be yours, and yours only."

"No ſooner did the Baron hear my

name than, throwing away his cane, drawing his ſword, and arrogantly advancing, he exclaimed, "Lindorf! What treachery is this?" Then, addreſſing himſelf to Matilda, ſaid, "I entreat, Mademoiſelle, you will go into my poſt-chaiſe. I have the poſitive commands of your aunt to bring you back to Dreſden, and I dare ſay the Baron of Lindorf will not think proper to oppoſe thoſe commands."

"That we ſhall preſently ſee, Sir," anſwered, I coldly, while I ſupported Matilda, whom ſo many contending paſſions had occaſioned to faint in my arms. I gently carried her into the poſt-houſe and laid her on the firſt bed I found; then, recommending her to the perſons preſent, telling them they ſhould be anſwerable for her forthcoming, I immediately left her, and went in ſearch of the Baron de Zaſtrow. I

found

found him demanding entrance, and forcibly withheld by two or three men, who let him go the moment I appeared. We walked together to ſome diſtance, and went into an encloſed garden. "You have accuſed me of treachery, ſir," ſaid I, "and appearances may give ſome ſmall juſtification to the ſuſpicion; but I aſſure you, on my honour, that chance, only, a moſt lucky one it is true, has brought me here. When I ſpoke to you, I was ignorant both that you were my rival and that Matilda had fled. If you think this ſufficient ſatisfaction, and will leave the young Counteſs of Walſtein abſolute miſtreſs of herſelf, I promiſe you to abide by her deciſion, and here offer you my future friendſhip and eſteem; if not, I will defend my own pretenſions and her liberty at the hazard of my life."

"Defend

"Defend them, then, traitor," replied he, attacking me with ſo much impetuoſity that, being off my guard, I received a wound in the left arm. It was not dangerous, and only rouſed my anger; and the Baron took ſo little care, thinking himſelf certain of victory, when he ſaw me wounded, that I eaſily diſarmed him. His ſword flew out of his hand and, as it fell, I ſet my foot on it—"Your life," ſaid I, "is now in my power; I am wounded and you are not; but, diſregarding this ſmall diſadvantage, I am ready to reſtore your ſword, and, again, put it to the chance of victory, if you do not renounce your pretenſions to Matilda, and promiſe to depart for Dreſden, immediately, without ſeeing her."

"He heſitated, and I ſaw, by the change of his countenance, my manner of acting had

had made ſome impreſſion. Pride ſtill ſtruggled, but honour, at laſt, was conqueror, and he preſented his hand. "Re-collect," ſaid he, "Sir, you have, on theſe conditions, offered your eſteem and friendſhip. I feel, at preſent, I ſhall be proud of and will, therefore, endeavour to merit them, by prevailing on my aunt to confirm that happineſs which is juſtly your due. Forget the paſt, and make my peace with Matilda. I pretend only to her friendſhip; though," added he, with a mixture of former ſelf-ſufficiency, "I am not accuſtomed to diſdain; nor do I know by what faſcination I ſo long have ſupported hers." I embraced him, ſaid ſhe would certainly be the laſt cruel beauty he would find, and that, had not her heart been pre-engaged ſhe could not poſſibly

have reſiſted ſo many accompliſhments and ſo much merit; after which we parted the beſt friends in the world.

"As ſoon as I ſaw him get into his chaiſe, I haſtened to Matilda, concerning whom I was very uneaſy. Her fainting, however, was moſt happily timed, ſince it deprived her of the knowledge of a tranſaction that might have occaſioned dreadful terrors. She began to recover and, looking round her, aſked where ſhe was, as I entered; then, reſuming all her accuſtomed grace, "Dear Lindorf," ſaid ſhe, "and is it not a dream? Is it true that I have once more found thee, and that we never ſhall forſake each other again?"

Scarcely had Lindorf finiſhed his phraſe ere he felt the white hand of Matilda

tilda upon his mouth.—"Fie, fie, young gentleman," ſaid ſhe, "I ſee no occaſion to repeat all that paſſed ſo literally. My dear brother, and my dear, dear ſiſter, do not believe a word he ſays. For, what if I had thought all that, can you ſuppoſe I would have ſpoken my thoughts? And, even, if I did, you know I was fainting. Who can tell what they do after ſo ſtrange a meeting, preſſed by one lover, protected by another, and amongſt rencounters and battles, and all this hurly burly? One may be allowed to be a little extravagant and ſilly, on ſuch occaſions; but, at preſent, I aſſure you, I am as prudent as"—Matilda ſmiled, with malicious pleaſure, on Lindorf; then, ſuddenly claſping his hand, added, "Well then, I ſay again and again, every thing I ſaid yeſterday! And I hope we ſhall never forſake each other more!"

Matilda was ſo charming, as ſhe ſaid this, and there was ſuch a mixture of rapture, pleaſantry, and confuſion in her countenance, that Lindorf imagined he loved her dearer than ever he had loved woman, and expreſſed himſelf with ſo much enthuſiaſm and fire that every body thought the ſame. Caroline was tranſported, ſhe kiſſed the Count, and ſaid, "Was I wrong when I told you how dearly he would love her?" Walſtein beheld Lindorf with aſtoniſhment, nor yet could comprehend, perfectly, all he heard and ſaw. To reaſon and friendſhip he had attributed the attachment of Lindorf to Matilda; for well he recollected to what exceſs he had adored Caroline; nor could imagine how a paſſion ſo energetic might ſo ſoon change its object. Yet was there every appearance of ſincerity in his manner, and

words;

ords; and Lindorf was no hypocrite. ide, the Count was ſo accuſtomed to ad his thoughts that, had he been ider any real conſtraint, it could not have caped him, and he could obſerve nothing it ſincerity. Lindorf, on his part, ieſſed what was paſſing in the mind of e Count, and whiſpered, "when we are one, dear Walſtein, you ſhall hear my ory, and your ſurpriſe will then not be ſo eat. In the mean time, do not imagine ur friend has acquired a facility at feign- g; or that he does not feel all he ex- eſſes." The Count claſped his hand, id entreated Matilda to finiſh her ſtory. here was not much to ſay, but the leaſt rcumſtance was intereſting to the Count d Caroline. Matilda replied, "You for- t, brother, that Lindorf is the hiſtorian, preſent"—Lindorf thus continued.

"I found

"I found a village ſurgeon to dreſs my wound, and hoped I might have concealed it from Matilda, as well as my conteſt with the Baron. I, therefore, only told her he had liſtened to reaſon, departed for Dreſden, and promiſed to appeaſe his aunt. She was moſt happy at the intelligence, and, being equally impatient to ſee our friend and brother, we preſently departed. The motion of the carriage, and, perhaps, the emotion of my heart, ſoon diſturbed my wound, and Matilda was greatly agitated when ſhe ſaw the blood. It was impoſſible any longer to conceal the cauſe, and we were obliged to ſtop here to dreſs it again. It was found deeper than had been imagined, and I was condemned to take four and twenty hours repoſe. In vain did I ſolicit my lovely partner to continue her journey, and leave me in this

wretched

wretched inn; no entreaties could gain her conſent."

"No, to be ſure," interrupted Matilda, with vivacity. "I know my duty better. Who ever heard of a heroine of romance abandoning her wounded knight, who had defended her againſt a ferocious raviſher? I even thought it neceſſary, according to cuſtom, to dreſs that wound myſelf, and bathe it with my tears. Did not I, Lindorf? And I hope you will own I tied the ſcarf with tolerable grace. Was not my attitude and manner affecting, brother?"

"The very picture of a princeſs of the age of Amadis."

"No; one of the miſtreſſes of the famous Galaor," ſaid ſhe, glancing at Lindorf.

"It

"It was the miſtreſs, then, that fixed the rover," replied he, kiſſing her hand.

"So ſaid Galaor to every miſtreſs, and they believed him; but I," continued Matilda, "am not ſo credulous, and mean to put your ſincerity to the proof—In thoſe times, a woman, with vaſt *ſang froid*, commanded her lover not to pronounce a ſingle word for two years, and he obeyed. Oh! happy age! I, though I only ſhall impoſe reſt and ſilence on my wounded hero till to-morrow, am certain to find him diſobedient!"

"Never, never," ſaid Lindorf kneeling; "and there will be ſome merit in my ſubmiſſion, for I have many things to tell my Walſtein."

"And ſo you would have paſſed a whole night

night in chattering; mean while the fever and the wound?—I reiterate my abſolute command!—Silence and reſt till to-morrow!"

Exact obedience was promiſed, though not without reluctance. The friends were both impatient to communicate their ſentiments; and, particularly, the Count, who was doubly intereſted to find the heart of Lindorf cured of paſſion for Caroline, and capable of making Matilda happy. It was, therefore, agreed that, in recompenſe for this their ſilence, they ſhould travel, on the morrow, in the chaiſe of Lindorf, and leave the coach of the Count to the ladies. This arrangement was equally acceptable to Caroline, who was herſelf moſt deſirous the friends ſhould mutually explain their feelings, that Walſtein might be convinced

of the exact truth of all ſhe had told him, and inform Lindorf of her preſent love for her huſband. Matilda, perhaps, might have preferred the care of her wounded knight; but Matilda dared not ſay ſo; and her brother having mentioned ſending his ſervant to Dreſden, with letters for his aunt, ſhe alſo retired to write, both to her and Mademoiſelle de Manteul, to whom ſhe ſent back the ſervants and chaiſe.

She preſently returned with her two letters. The Count read that to Madam de Zaſtrow, approved it, added a few lines from himſelf, and, perceiving Matilda concealed the one ſhe had written to Mademoiſelle de Manteul, ſaid, ſmiling, "I ſuppoſe you expreſs your gratitude in ſtrong terms to your zealous friend."

"I ex-

"I expreſs it as I feel it; and, I think, that is ſaying a great deal. You, who are one of the heroes of friendſhip, ought, certainly, to be delighted to find ſuch an inſtance of its effects; eſpecially in a woman."——The Count continued to ſmile.——"And pray now, what is the meaning of that ironic air? What, you are incredulous?—Siſter Caroline, I hope you will take the part of the ſex."

"We will both take its part," anſwered Caroline, "and prove how capable women are of friendſhip."

"I never doubted it," replied Walſtein; "nay, I even believe that pure diſintereſted friendſhip is leſs rare among women than it is ſuppoſed. It is a ſenſation wholly accordant to their gentle and tender nature;

but you will forgive me for not imagining Mademoiſelle de Manteul one of its models."

"Brother!—After ſo many proofs!"

"I am almoſt ſorry, dear Matilda, to rob you of that happy credulity which ſo well proves the innocence of your heart; but, I muſt own, I have very ſtrong doubts concerning thoſe proofs. Mademoiſelle de Manteul appeared greatly affected; but was it for you or for herſelf? Was it to ſerve a friend or to get rid of a rival? Every circumſtance, I think, beſpeaks the latter."

Matilda was confounded. A thouſand little incidents were recollected, and a thouſand others ruſhed forward to prove her brother was right; yet could ſhe not inſtantly

inſtantly give her up, and replied, with vivacity, "Surely you muſt be deceived, ſhe diſlikes, nay, deteſts the Baron; ſhe was always ſpeaking ill of and turning him to ridicule."

"Right, right; to augment your repugnance. This is the very cauſe why I ſay ſhe is not a true friend. Had Mademoiſelle de Manteul, the victim of an involuntary paſſion, opened her heart to you, and given you ſecret for ſecret; had you together concerted the means of avoiding a marriage that muſt render you both unhappy, I ſhould have faith in her friendſhip, and even be far from blaming her; but all this artifice at her age is odious: ſhe only had herſelf in view by prompting you to an imprudent ſtep, which the event has juſtified, but which might have been your deſtruction."

Lindorf, here, took up the ſubject: "You are too ſevere, dear Walſtein; be the motives of Mademoiſelle de Manteul what they may, ſhe has ſerved me ſo eſſentially that it becomes me to undertake her juſtification, and I ſee nothing in all this but artifice which may well be permitted to love; beſides, while ſhe was ſerving herſelf, ſhe was, alſo, ſaving her friend from inevitable misfortune."

"No doubt," ſaid Matilda, who took courage at ſeeing herſelf ſupported; "for, one day longer, and I had been forced to marry that odious Baron."

"And do you not perceive, my dear girl, that, I being on the road, one day longer and you had been for ever freed from tyranny, without that violence which is ever

prejudicial

prejudicial to a young lady's reputation, and without offence to an aunt to whoſe cares you are certainly much indebted? Your only error, dear Matilda, was that of ſuſpecting my friendſhip; of ſuppoſing, for an inſtant, I could abandon you; and of blindly confiding in an imprudent young lady, though, I own, ſhe is rather to blame than you."

"Dear, dear brother," cried Matilda, all in tears, and running into his arms, "pardon us both. Ah! how do I reproach myſelf for having mentioned, for having given you an ill opinion of her! But ſo far was I from ſuſpecting it that I ſuppoſed you would admire her conduct and her zeal."

Lindorf joined Matilda, and chid his friend for his ſeverity. Caroline claſped

her to her boſom, and, while ſhe wiped away her tears, wept in concert——"Think not I wiſh ill to Mademoiſelle de Manteul," ſaid the Count, exceedingly affected. "No, to her I owe the happineſs of beholding thoſe I love united. So freely do I pardon her that I ſincerely hope ſhe may marry de Zaſtrow, and will even ſpeak in her behalf to my aunt. And now, Matilda, do thou pardon me for having afflicted and undeceived thee. It will be a leſſon to thee, my dear, and the laſt I ſhall ever give thee; for, from this moment, I commit thy conduct, and thy felicity to Lindorf. Thou knoweſt how ardently I have deſired to ſee thee his. Oh! Caroline, Oh! my ſiſter, Oh! my friend, ſcarcely can my heart contain its joys, the ſweet ſenſations this happy moment brings!"

Matilda a thouſand times thanked her brother for his ſincerity, and for the inſtruction it contained. "Though," ſaid ſhe, "I ſcarcely can repent my imprudence, ſince it has made us all happy a day ſooner." And added that ſhe would, in a poſtſcript, let Mademoiſelle de Manteul pleaſantly underſtand that, at preſent, ſhe was acquainted with her motives.——The Count was not at all deceived in his conjectures, for Mademoiſelle de Manteul had been ſolely prompted by her paſſion for the young Baron de Zaſtrow, who had paid her ſome attentions before he went on his travels, and who, ſhe hoped, would have married her on his return. The arrival of Matilda at Dreſden, the wiſhes of her aunt, the attachment of the young Baron to the amiable ſpouſe deſtined him, all repelled hopes which Matilda's love of Lindorf once more

animated. She had only ſought her friendſhip to have an opportunity of ſeeing the Baron revive his former ſentiments, diſcover thoſe of Matilda, and, if poſſible, turn them towards ſome other object. At firſt ſhe had had her brother in view, and, therefore, had ſhewn Matilda his letter; but her joy was exceſſive when ſhe learned this lover already exiſted, and that her young rival was determined on the moſt peremptory reſiſtance. This it was her advantage to encourage all in her power; but this alone was not ſufficient; the beſt means of obtaining her own end, ſhe ſuppoſed, would be to remove Matilda from Dreſden. This might beſt be done by engaging her to take ſome ſtep which ſhould abſolutely break off the intended match. She it was who perſuaded Madam de Zaſtrow, and her nephew, that, by terrifying

rifying Matilda, they might obtain her conſent; and what the conſequence of this terror and the ſucceſs of her ſchemes were has already been ſeen. Yet was ſhe but little benefited by her artifice, for the young Baron, recognizing, in the poſt-chaiſe, the former maid of Mademoiſelle de Manteul, and being convinced ſhe had favored Matilda's flight, was irritated at the perfidious trick that had been played him. But this perfidy was the conſequence of affection; and when the vanity of man is flattered he is generally indulgent.

Return we to our happy travellers. The wound of Lindorf healed apace, ſo excellent a balſamic is happineſs, and they ſet off for Berlin; Caroline and Matilda in one of the carriages, and the two friends in the other. Leave we theſe lovely ladies to

ſpeak of thoſe they held moſt dear, to congratulate each other, to form plans of future delight, and to vow eternal friendſhip. Leave we them frequently to look out of the carriage after the poſt-chaiſe that followed, wiſhing impatiently to arrive, and let us examine how Walſtein and Lindorf paſſed their time.

They partook of the impatience we have mentioned; but man feels not ſo ſenſibly thoſe ſhort privations which are ſubjects of ſuch real uneaſineſs to the tender heart of woman. Perhaps, on great occaſions, the former may be more ardent, more paſſionate, more capable of riſking every thing for the object of their love; but the daily proofs, the intervening fears, and all the ſhades of a delicate and conſtant paſſion, are much more peculiar to women; few men

men are ſuſceptible of them, nay, few know their value. Our travellers, indeed, had not time to think of them; yet had they been in the chaiſe ſome time without entering into any converſation. They ſat ſilent, for Lindorf knew not where to begin, or what to ſay to the huſband of Caroline, and the Count feared leſt the moſt trifling queſtion might bear the aſpect of reproach: he, however, was the firſt to ſpeak, and told his friend how much he had been afflicted by reading the manuſcript he had left with Caroline. "I have not the leaſt fear or ſcruple," ſaid he, "in confiding the happineſs of a ſiſter to the man to whom I am ſo infinitely indebted, and who, loving and beloved by the moſt angelic woman the world contains, could not only ſacrifice his own paſſion, but endeavour to inſpire her with love for another. Ah! dear

Lindorf," ſaid he, " while to you I owe the heart of Caroline and the felicity of Matilda, is it poſſible I ever can acquit myſelf of the wondrous debt? Yet, ſpeak, explain how this ſudden revolution in your affections, which yet I underſtand not, has happened. Is not all you teſtify for my ſiſter another ſacrifice of generous friendſhip? Endeavour not to impoſe upon yourſelf. Can Caroline——

" Dear Walſtein," interrupted Lindorf, inſtantly, " I would utter oaths if I did not know the word of your friend were ſufficient. Believe that friend, then, when he aſſures you he is worthy of becoming your brother; and that nothing has he expreſſed that he has not felt. I love Caroline, no doubt, but it is as I love her huſband, with friendſhip as pure and ſtrong as

it

it is durable; but I love my dear Matilda as the ſole woman on earth who now can make me happy—You are ſurpriſed, but hear what I have to ſay. Learn what has paſſed in the heart you yourſelf have formed ſince laſt we parted."

The Count was moſt deſirous to hear, and ſat attentive while Lindorf thus continued.

"Since you have read my manuſcript, Walſtein, you are informed of my firſt acquaintance with Caroline, and what were the ſentiments ſhe inſpired. I ſhall attempt no juſtification of myſelf. You can judge whether it be poſſible to ſee her with indifference. I proteſt, however, before heaven, that, notwithſtanding all her beauty, all her charms, ſhe would have been totally

totally indifferent to me had I had the leaſt ſuſpicion ſhe was your wife. But this how might I have? You were ſilent; Caroline, then ſo young, bore not your name, and the good Canoneſs gave evident marks of wiſhing to ſee us united. Every circumſtance told me ſhe was free and that I might dare to love her——Oh! wherefore, my friend, that fatal reſerve?——Yet let us paſs this over. Ignorant in my guilt, I offended the man for whom I would willingly have ſacrificed my life; he has ſeen ſome faint picture of my grief, my remorſe, and the reſolution I took, the inſtant I diſcovered my crime, to fly. I thought I might, in ſome meaſure, repair the involuntary wrong I had done by ſhewing Caroline who and what the huſband was ſhe fled. I knew her ſoul congenial to yours, capable of eſtimating its worth, and that

you

you were formed to admire and adore each other."

"It was thy noble friendſhip," exclaimed the Count, "which alone could draw me with ſuch features and ſuch colours as could affect the heart of Caroline. Yes, dear Lindorf, to thee alone I owe that heart and all the exquiſite felicity I enjoy. No, had it not been for that paſſion with which thou ſo continually reproacheſt thyſelf, Caroline, perhaps, never had loved me. But go on, dear friend, I long to be convinced thou art equally happy, and that thou thinkeſt Matilda a proper recompenſe for the ſublime efforts thou haſt made to conquer a paſſion which could dictate the manuſcript thou lefteſt at Rindaw and baniſh thee from Caroline."

"I left

"I left her," replied Lindorf, "determined never to ſee her more, till, by wholly ſubduing my fatal paſſion, I were worthy her and you; and far was I from foreſeeing this bliſsful moment was ſo near. The ſolitude of Ronebourg augmented my love and gloomy melancholy; inceſſantly did fancy tranſport me to the pavilion of Rindaw, inceſſantly was Caroline preſent. I ſaw her, heard her, converſed with her, and when the ſweet illuſion vaniſhed, deſpair and remorſe acquired additional ſtrength, and they were tried to the utmoſt by your arrival and converſation. You loved Caroline, your happineſs depended on being beloved by her, and again I renewed my vow of ſurmounting my paſſion; or, rather, of forſaking my country, and carefully concealing from you I had been your rival. This

vow had been held ſacred; never had the name of Caroline eſcaped my lips had not ſhe, like an apparition, appeared at Ronebourg, the occaſion of which I yet underſtand not, and deprived me of reaſon. Excuſe me from deſcribing all I felt while I thought I beheld her dying, but imagine what it muſt be when it could make me betray the ſecret of my heart, and inform you that a friend, towards whom you had acted with ſuch magnanimity, was the guilty lover of your wife!

"My determination was to take vengeance on myſelf, and follow her whom I thought dead; but ſigns of returning life prevented me: ſhe was reſtored to you, and I wiſhed not to interrupt your happineſs by the horrid ſpectacle of ſuicide. I went into my room, wrote the letter you

found, mounted my horſe, and rode full ſpeed, without knowing whither I went, or having ſo much as a ſingle ſervant with me. The firſt day I ſuffered my horſe to take which road he pleaſed, and, at night, ſtopped at a wretched inn; I endeavoured, however, to collect my ideas, and reſolved to follow my firſt intention, which was to go to England. I had written to court and obtained permiſſion for that purpoſe, my ſervant and baggage might ſoon follow, and I immediately took the road to Hamburg, where I meant to embark. I rode poſt day and night, and this continual change of ſcene correſponded with the agitation of my ſoul, to which repoſe was inſupportable. I wiſhed to find a veſſel ready to ſail to Hamburg, and to ſtep into it as I got out of my chaiſe; but, happily, there were none ready. Some hours

hours after my arrival, I was ſeized with a burning fever, which laſted ſeveral days; the phyſician, whom my hoſt called in, had me bled ſo abundantly that exceſſive weakneſs was the conſequence, and retarded my departure. Obliged to remain at Hamburg till I gathered ſtrength, I wrote to my valet de chambre to come to me there. My ſickneſs was the natural conſequence of my feelings, and the fatigues of my journey, and was certainly a fortunate one. It calmed the violence of my tranſports, and obliged me to follow the plan I myſelf had laid down, as ſoon as I knew you to be the huſband of Caroline.

" At preſent, when I no longer feel this weakneſs, I may own that more than twenty times on the road was I tempted to return to Ronebourg, and from your hand

demand

demand Caroline or death. Had I been obliged to remain at Hamburg, without falling ill, perhaps, I ſhould have been overcome, and for ever have rendered myſelf unworthy your eſteem and friendſhip. My fever, and its conſequent weakneſs, ſhewed me objects under a different point of view; and, whether the organization of the body influences the mind, whether it was the reſult of reflections inceſſantly made, or whether friendſhip really triumphed over love, certain it is my paſſion, each day, became feebler; or rather, reaſon became ſtronger. I ſtill adored Caroline, but I adored her as a deity, without daring to ſuppoſe I again might ſee her. I ſhuddered even at the idea, and, far from wiſhing to return, I wiſhed to remove farther off, and therefore waited impatiently for Varner.

" Such was the temper of my mind when
ıe young Baron de Manteul arrived at
lamburg, and came to lodge in the ſame
›tel; my hoſt immediately informed him
: my illneſs, exaggerated the danger I
ıd been in, the care he had taken of me,
ıe ſlow recovery of my ſtrength, and in-
›ired him with a wiſh to become ac-
uainted with me. He ſent up his com-
liments, and, as his was a Saxon family
ell known, I received him with pleaſure.
lis appearance gave me a favourable im-
reſſion, which was confirmed by his con-
erſation. He was equally pleaſed with
ıe, and in a few hours we were old friends.
Ie, likewiſe, was going to England, but
ould not ſtop more than three days at
lamburg: hearing I intended to croſs the
:a, he earneſtly entreated me to embark on
oard the ſame ſhip. My health, which

daily

daily grew ſtronger, permitted me to depart, and I willingly conſented to a requeſt by which I ſhould gain ſuch an agreeable companion. I left a letter of inſtructions for my valet with the hoſt, and in two days we left Hamburg, mutually congratulating each other on this lucky rencontre: we further agreed to live together, at London, and take lodgings in the ſame houſe.

"This young gentleman was the more agreeable to me for being almoſt as melancholy as myſelf, and we often ſighed in ſympathy: he firſt made the remark. During the voyage we were alone on the deck, each abſorbed in his own ideas, and each preſerving the moſt profound ſilence. Manteul at length ſpoke; "I think," ſaid he, "I have diſcovered another conformity between us. Is it not true, dear Lindorf,

that your heart is engaged, and that you deeply regret ſome perſon whom you have left in your own country?" I, not chooſing to give a direct anſwer, retorted the queſtion, and told him he had made the confeſſion."

"I own it," replied he; "and, did you know the perſon I regret, you, then, would have ſome knowledge of what my feelings are. When I quitted Saxony, I imagined I fled from the danger of loving the moſt charming woman in the world; but, now I ſee her no more, I feel the miſchief is done, and that I fled too late."

"I owned my heart was as much enflaved as his, but added nothing farther; I rather endeavoured to turn the converſation, by making reflections on the pangs and effects of love.

"We

"We had a good voyage and arrived ſafe at London. The novelty of this vaſt city, its riches, the multitude of its inhabitants, and that peculiarity of manners which diſtance and a government ſo different produce, greatly relieved my melancholy; and, as I moſt ſincerely deſired to be wholly cured of it, I myſelf ardently ſought amuſement. I recovered health and ſtrength apace, and even a part of my natural cheerfulneſs, yet did Caroline occupy my heart and thoughts, and, whenever I was alone, I found they turned wholly on her; but, as I dreaded the dangerous recollection, I took every poſſible means to remove it, and remained alone as ſeldom as poſſible. Manteul ſeldom left me; he found, each day, his attachment increaſe, and ſeemed to fear we ſhould part too ſoon. He told me he had received letters from Dreſden, which

which had lain at his banker's, waiting his arrival at London, that gave him vaſt pleaſure. "My return," ſaid he, "may be much ſooner than I ſuppoſed; but the event that will then call me back will be ſo happy a one I ſhall only have my friend to regret." I could eaſily perceive he wiſhed to open his heart to me, but that would have required a reciprocal confidence, and I was determined never to reveal my criminal ſecret, nor ever once to pronounce the name of Caroline; I, therefore, forbore to aſk him who the object of his attachment might be, or to put any one queſtion which might lead him to ſpeak.

"We had been preſented, by our ambaſſador at London, to ſeveral Engliſh noblemen; and, among others, we one day dined with the Earl of Saliſbury. After dinner the toaſt went round, as you know, Wal-

ſtein, is the cuſtom in England, and the health of the favourite lady given by each gueſt. When the toaſt came to me, my heart named Caroline, and the word roſe to my lips. I forbore, however, and begged they would excuſe my naming the lady whoſe health I drank. They joked me on my great diſcretion, and drank to the health of the fair incognito.

"I ſhall not be ſo diſcreet as Lindorf," ſaid Manteul, when it came to his turn; "I am proud to drink the health of Matilda, Counteſs of Walſtein."

"The name ſtruck me ſo forcibly that I ſcarcely could believe what I heard real; but it was repeated round the table ſo often, that I could no longer doubt it was that ſame Matilda by whom I had been ſo tenderly

erly beloved, and whom I had ſo cruelly offended. It is impoſſible I ſhould paint the agitation I was in; though, but a moment before, I ſhould not have ſuppoſed any human power could have pronounced a name, except Caroline, that might have made an equal impreſſion. Manteul ſat too far off for me to aſk whether it was Matilda whom he loved; yet, how might I doubt when I beheld his animated countenance, as he repeated, himſelf, and heard others repeat, her name? I looked and thought him handſomer than uſual; he ſeemed to poſſeſs all the qualities of a lover, and, certainly, ſaid I, he is beloved. The letters which gave him ſo much pleaſure are, certainly, from Matilda, and his quick return to Dreſden, which is to render him ſo happy, is, alſo, as certainly, the conſequence of her command: he is

then to receive her hand whoſe heart he already poſſeſſes!

"Theſe ideas ran in my mind all the afternoon, and accompanied me to the play, whither I was dragged in ſpite of myſelf. I wiſhed immediately to have converſed with Manteul, to have learned his ſecret; reproached myſelf for having miſſed the opportunity, and feared leſt it might not return; at laſt, my thoughts were ſo diſturbed that, finding myſelf uneaſy in the play-houſe, where I neither heard nor ſaw, I determined to quit it and come home. I there waited the arrival of Manteul with an impatience wholly unaccountable to myſelf. It was not long before he came; my going had alarmed him, and ſcarcely did I give him time to tell me ſo before I aſked if the lady whoſe health he had drunk

were

were the lady he loved, and if ſhe were ſiſter to the Count of Walſtein, Ambaſſador in Ruſſia."

"Ay, certainly," replied he, with tranſport; "ſhe, ſhe herſelf, your charming countrywoman! Are you acquainted with her? It is ſome time ſince ſhe left Berlin."

"I know her brother," replied I, eluding his queſtion. "The Count of Walſtein has been to me more than a friend; a father, a ſaviour, the man in the world moſt dear to my heart."

"Ah! dear Lindorf," ſaid Manteul, embracing me with rapture, "if you are upon theſe terms with the Count of Walſtein, I may owe all my future bliſs to your friendſhip. She has often proteſted

that her brother, alone, had a right to diſpoſe of her hand; and to him you may ſpeak for me; you may engage him to favour my paſſion.——Say, will you, Lindorf, will you?"

"Doubt it not, my friend. Should Matilda, alſo, find this union that which her heart deſires, I then will uſe all the power of my friendſhip with the Count to engage him in your intereſt. But I thought Matilda, in ſome meaſure, contracted to the Baron de Zaſtrow."

"Alas! it was that projected marriage which alone determined me to leave Dreſden. I was the friend of de Zaſtrow, and would not become his rival. I, then, was ignorant how much Matilda diſliked him; but the letter from my ſiſter, which I found waiting

waiting my arrival here, informed me of it, and has given me the moſt flattering hopes."

"And had you none before you received that letter?"

"None, none. Matilda never teſtified any thing more than eſteem for me, and that friendſhip which I thought the conſequence of her intimacy with my ſiſter; ſhe did not ſeem even to perceive how much I preferred her to every other woman. Before I left her I myſelf knew not the ſtrength of my own paſſion; but my ſiſter's letter, by making happineſs poſſible, has made me feel how much I adore that lovely lady."

"I moſt ardently wiſhed to get a ſight of this letter he mentioned, and my wiſh

was gratified; he gave it me to read.—"Here, take it, my friend," ſaid he, "and ſee if I have not ſome reaſon to flatter myſelf I am beloved."—I accordingly took it and, with great emotion, began to read.

"Mademoiſelle de Manteul blamed her "brother for departing, not following her "advice, and openly paying his addreſſes "to the young Counteſs. The Baron de "Zaſtrow had no right to be affronted; "he was hated, and the marriage would "never take place. Every thing, on the "contrary, proved to her that her brother "was beloved; ſhe had remarked it before "he left Dreſden, and ſhe now had not "any doubt. Matilda was very ſorry "when ſhe heard he was gone, ſhe had "even ſhed tears; her former cheerfulneſs "had forſaken her, and what convinces

"me,

" me, ſaid ſhe, your abſence cauſes her me-
" lancholy is that it redoubles whenever
" England is mentioned. She yeſterday
" ſaid, in a pet which made her look more
" lovely, " I wonder why the men are all
" ſo eager to run to that good for nothing
" England!" This, brother, I ſhould think
" a tolerably favourable ſymptom, and, if
" you want a ſtill ſtronger, I muſt tell you
" ſhe herſelf has begged me to ſhow her
" your letters. Profit by this informa-
" tion. You have ſtill time enough to
" repair the folly you have committed in
" leaving Dreſden. Write me a letter,
" immediately; not by way of anſwer to
" this, but ſeem to confide the ſecret of
" your paſſion for my young friend to me;
" entreat me to ſound her thoughts; ſay
" fear alone occaſioned you to go, but that
" the leaſt ray of hope will bring you

"back; ſhe will read the letter in my "preſence: I ſhall ſee what impreſſion it "makes, and I dare believe the ſecret of "her heart will not eſcape my penetration. "I hope ſoon to give you more certain "information which ſhall haſten your "return."

"This letter ſeemed to me a clear proof that Matilda loved young Manteul, and I felt a painful ſenſation, a ſpaſm of the heart, which I could not account for, and which I endeavoured to conceal. I returned the letter, and confirmed his hopes.—"I have written to my ſiſter," ſaid he, "exactly as ſhe preſcribed, and I impatiently wait her anſwer: if, as ſhe thinks, it ſhould be favourable, and if Matilda will permit me to aſpire to the honour and happineſs of making her mine, you, dear Lindorf, may be

ſer-

ſerviceable to my intereſts with the Count, her brother. I may owe my felicity to you, and my friendſhip for you will thus be increaſed."

"This I ſolemnly promiſed, but not without a ſenſation that ſeemed very like jealouſy, which the deſcription he gave of the lovely Matilda augmented. I could not deny I had often ſeen her before ſhe left Berlin, and he added, "You would not know her, Lindorf; no, you would not know her. You cannot imagine how much ſhe is altered, how much improved. I know not whether it be poſſible to find a more beautiful woman; but a more graceful, a more charming one the world does not contain: ſhe has every thing that can ſeduce and awe the heart. Her features have not a tame regularity; no, each has

an expreſſion peculiar to itſelf; her countenance is continually varying, and is the mirror of a moſt excellent heart, and a moſt amiable mind. Never long the ſame, ſhe is playful, ſportive, froward, cheerful, pretending to take pet, and laughing at the deception ſhe has occaſioned. She inſpires joy and pleaſure in all around her. At other times, mild, fond, and full of ſenſibility, ſhe would melt the coldeſt or the hardeſt heart. Such I beheld her, every day; and how might I reſiſt ſo many allurements; or what ſhall be my happineſs ſhould ſhe become mine?"

"My ſecret regret for having wilfully caſt this happineſs from me was the anſwer my heart returned to Manteul. And had I!——had I been beloved by this charming lady! And did it once depend only on me

to

to have made her for ever mine! Oh! how little had I merited a gift the value of which too late I knew! What! had ſhe not a right to forget the man who repaid her affection with the blackeſt ingratitude; neglected, abandoned her, and, on the very firſt occaſion, yielding wholly to the love of another, repelled the heart which fondly had beſtowed itſelf on him, and obliged it to ſeek a mate more worthy?——Theſe ideas rapidly ſucceeded each other in my mind, and gave me an abſent and gloomy air, at which Manteul might well have been ſurpriſed; but he was too much intereſted in the ſubject of the converſation to perceive it; was too deſirous of continuing to ſpeak of his dear Matilda, and his future hopes. It was not poſſible, however, for me to hear him unmoved; I, therefore, pretended I was not very well, and withdrew.

"No

"No ſooner was I alone than I began to inquire what my ſenſations were, and how I might feel this ſtrange emotion concerning an event which I ought to have foreſeen. Since I had not loved Matilda, ſince I had renounced her heart and hand, what were my rights? Ought I not to be happy that another had been more juſt, and made reparation for my wrongs? Alas! ſo far was I from being happy, from thinking thus, that it ſeemed as if Manteul bore away a treaſure which appertained to me alone; nay, I was inconſiſtent, unjuſt enough to accuſe Matilda of want of conſtancy, guilty as I myſelf had been! I recollected every circumſtance of our acquaintance, thoſe tender promiſes, ſo ingenuous, ſo often repeated in her letters, to love me, and me only, and exclaimed all women are inconſtant; as if I myſelf had

not been an example that men have, at leaſt that I had, very little reaſon for theſe reproaches!

"I next reflected on the ſituation in which I ſtood with Manteul, and that folly which, a ſecond time, had made me the rival of a friend. Yet durſt I not allow myſelf to ſay I was his rival, but promiſed, if he were beloved, as every thing gave me reaſon to ſuppoſe, I would ſerve him with all the ardour of friendſhip: this I preſently aſſured him of, and we waited, with equal impatience, the anſwer of his ſiſter, which was to contain his ſentence."

"Well, but Caroline? Is ſhe wholly forgotten; already effaced from that heart where ſhe had reigned with ſuch unbounded ſway?"

"From my own experience, Walſtein, I am convinced the heart, when it abſolutely loſes hope, loſes, in part, its pain; not, perhaps, in every inſtance, but in moſt; and, where love is the paſſion, whenever a new object is found, that, by any concurrence of circumſtances, becomes intereſting, the former is preſently forgotten; at leaſt, ſo far forgotten as not to be remembered with the ſame reſtleſs and tormenting ſenſations. I thought of Caroline, Counteſs of Walſtein, but not of Caroline of Lichtfield, and was moſt happy to encourage the mutability; my imagination no longer wandered in the gardens of Rindaw, or dwelt in the pavilion, but ſaw Caroline at Berlin, there in company with the beſt of huſbands, and enjoying her felicity. Happy was I when thus I might remember her without remorſe, and, whenever

her

her name roſe to memory, the name of my friend was, alſo, preſent; while that of Matilda, which Manteul was inceſſantly repeating, gave me an emotion, the origin of which I, who had had ſo much experience, could not miſtake. Thus, my friend, you ſee my cure is far advanced; and you ſoon will learn in what manner I was perfectly reſtored.

"On our firſt arrival in England, we deſigned to have travelled through the different counties; but, ſuppoſing we ſhould remain there all winter, intended to have deferred our journey till the ſpring. Manteul, determined to depart immediately, ſhould his ſiſter's letter recall him to Dreſden, entreated me now to go with him and, at leaſt, viſit the moſt famous places. Since I had learned his ſecret I was ill at

eaſe,

eaſe, and little inclined to reſt long in one place. A journey, I imagined, would be ſome relief, and I willingly conſented. We ſet off, therefore, paſſed through various counties, and a part of Wales, ſtopping to examine what was held moſt curious and intereſting. This, dear Count, is not the moment to give you a deſcription of a country where peace and liberty produce abundance, where the productive fields, cultivated by wealthy farmers, are not, like ours, the ſcenes of bloody battles, and all their direful attendants. Certain of finding them nouriſhment, the inhabitants fear not to marry and beget children. The towns, villages, and cities, are extremely populous, and every perſon ſeems happy; and, as the Engliſh nobility paſs one part of the year at their country ſeats, where they contribute to the proſperity of their tenants,

tenants, thoſe beautiful country ſeats are built with an elegance, and preſerved in a ſtyle of grandeur and taſte, very different from the gloomy magnificence of our antique chateaus. If we wiſh to form an idea of the beauties of nature, and the inexpreſſible charms of a country life, we muſt go to England."

"You augment the wiſh I have to ſee that country," ſaid the Count; "I intend to take my dear Caroline thither; but, till that happens, ſhall be glad of farther information."

"I know not whether I am capable of affording you any," replied Lindorf, "for we travelled with too much rapidity, and our hearts and minds were too much preoccupied, to remark the numerous things

deſerving

deſerving notice. I have only juſt mentioned what muſt neceſſarily ſtrike every foreigner who beholds England for the firſt time.

" Impatience to receive news from Dreſden made us ſoon turn our faces towards London: I certainly was more uneaſy than Manteul. The hope he had conceived contributed much to his happineſs, which I rather envied than participated; and the more cheerful and animated I ſaw him the more did my ſecret chagrin and gloom increaſe. I ſpoke to him, however, continually, concerning Matilda, led him to repeat the moſt minute circumſtances, and was as inexhauſtible in my queſtions as Manteul was in replies. This was our chief ſubject of converſation, and, every moment, grief, regret, jealouſy, and I may add love, acquired new force. Manteul

teul found no letters when we came to London; but, two days after our arrival, as I was riſing, intending to breakfaſt with him, his ſervant brought me a letter, with my addreſs. Surpriſed at this, I immediately was going to him, but was informed he was gone out, and would not be home before dinner. My aſtoniſhment increaſed, and I opened the letter, not without emotion, which ſtill became more forcible when I ſaw the cover incloſed a letter that had been opened, addreſſed to Manteul, with the poſt-mark of Dreſden, which, by its ſize, ſeemed ſtill to contain another. This I ſuppoſed to be the anſwer of his ſiſter, and a letter incloſed from Matilda. But wherefore not bring them himſelf? In ſpite of my impatience to ſee it, I began by reading the few lines Manteul had written in the cover.

« Here

"Here it is," ſaid Lindorf, taking it from his pocket-book, "and imagine what was my ſurpriſe."

"I know not whether to the beſt of "friends or moſt traiterous of men I "incloſe the letters I have juſt received; "while I thus abſolutely cede to the for- "mer opinion, I ſhall prove I wiſh to find "I am not miſtaken, however appearances "may ſay the contrary.—And is Lindorf "then the lover of Matilda? By her be- "loved? The huſband of her choice, ſe- "lected by her brother, and acknowledg- "ed by her heart? The man to whom ſhe "would inſtantly ſacrifice the homage of "the adoring world; and is it from her- "ſelf I learn all this?—Oh! Lindorf, "what motive can you have had for the "inconceivable myſteriouſneſs of your "conduct?

" conduct? I cannot think you capable of " baſe treachery; yet I had ſome right to " your confidence and ſincerity.—I am " loſt in doubt, and own I fear the conſe- " quences of meeting you at this moment. " Send your anſwer to the Orange Coffee- " houſe; there can be no reaſon for longer " diſſimulation, for, ſince you are beloved, " you no longer have a rival.

" Manteul."

" It is impoſſible to tell you what I felt. Was I—Was I ſtill beloved by the charming, the conſtant Matilda? Was it for me, ungrateful as I was, that ſhe refuſed the addreſſes of de Zaſtrow, of Manteul, nay of *the whole world!* I opened the letter and found one addreſſed to me; the hand was well known, and an emotion, almoſt involuntary, brought it to my lips. I was

about

about to open and enjoy the exceſs of my happineſs when a ſudden and bitter reflection ſtopped me. Again at the expence of a friend muſt I be happy; and this friend had reaſon to ſuppoſe me perfidious. I could not endure the thought. You, dear Count, are capable of imagining what my feelings were, and the increaſe they ſuffered by recollection. This was the ſecond time love had aſſaulted friendſhip, and a ſecond time was I deſirous friendſhip ſhould be victorious. I would not read the letters till I firſt had juſtified myſelf to Manteul, and till I had his free conſent to read them: I locked them up, and inſtantly went in ſearch of him to the coffee-houſe, where he had not yet been, and where the moſt probable way of meeting him would have been to wait; but waiting at this moment was impoſſible. I ran to ſeek

him

him elſewhere. I rather choſe ſpeaking to him than writing a letter long enough to have explained all the reaſons of my conduct, which little ſuited my impatience; but, as we might miſs each other in the ſearch, I left a line at the coffee-houſe, ſaying "he did me juſtice in believing me "incapable of perfidy; that, certainly, I "had many things to reproach myſelf with, "but not that of treachery towards him. "Matilda only had a right to complain. I "begged him to wait at the coffee-houſe, "and pledged myſelf to give him every ex-"planation he could require, aſſuring him I "ſhould not take a moment's reſt till he "had heard me. I had not read, nor would "read, a line in the letters he had ſent me, "and hoped to prove how highly I valued "his eſteem and friendſhip!"

After giving this note to the waiter I con-

tinued my ſearch, went to the Pruſſian Ambaſſador's, into the Park, to all our acquaintances, but miſſed him every where; and, returning to the coffee-houſe, found, to my great vexation, he had been there and was gone, but that he had left a note for me, which was this. (Lindorf read it to the Count.)

" I wiſh to ſee and ſpeak with you, dear " Lindorf, but it is not poſſible. Lord " Cavendiſh has requeſted me to accom- " pany him to Newmarket; he is ſetting " off immediately, and I ſcarcely have time " to write a word. You know how deſir- " ous I am of ſeeing thoſe famous races, " and I was the more ready to accept the " offer becauſe my mind is at preſent in " great need of relief. Your note, and " eſpecially your eagerneſs to ſee me before

" you

" you have read your letters, tell me all that
" I at preſent wiſh to know. Read them,
" dear friend, and if you are not, in half
" an hour, on the road to Dreſden you do not
" merit your happineſs. Could any thing
" diſturb, or alter, my eſteem and friend-
" ſhip for you it would be to hear you were
" in London at this time to-morrow. Fare-
" well, dear Lindorf, and be as happy as
" you deſerve; as happy as you muſt be
" with the moſt lovely of women. I will
" ſeek another like her, if poſſible, and whoſe
" heart is free. Should the company and
" ſports of Newmarket have the effect
" I hope, you will ſoon hear from me. I
" doubt not but you will write and give
" me the account you promiſe; not by way
" of explanation, it is not requiſite, but in
" the confidence of friendſhip, and to one
" who is infinitely intereſted both for Lin-

"dorf and Matilda. *She*, you ſay, *only has* "*a right to complain*—Happy Lindorf!— "Fly, behold her, and ſhe will not have "that right long.

"Manteul."

"Scarcely had I finiſhed before I flew to the houſe of Lord Cavendiſh, hoping ſtill to find him, but they were gone poſt, and I heſitated, for a moment, whether I ſhould or ſhould not follow; but motives ſo ſtrong and a deſire ſo ardent drew me elſewhere that I could not long reſiſt. I once more read the note of Manteul, and finding he avoided me, "Why," ſaid I, "ſhould I force the ſight of a happy rival on him in the firſt paroxyſm of grief?" Was I in reality beloved by the generous Matilda? Manteul, only, yet, had told me ſo, and I longed to ſee the confirmation. I, therefore, returned home, and read the two letters

ters I am going to ſhew you. You will begin by reading that of Mademoiſelle de Manteul, as I did, though moſt impatient to ſee the other, which, addreſſed to me, made my heart palpitate. I trembled to open a paper where each word, traced by the hand of Matilda, muſt be a reproach to this inconſtant heart. She, perhaps, knew not my infidelity; but was I, therefore, leſs culpable?—Ah! when I did read, how did her ingenuous and affectionate ſoul, which infuſed itſelf into the paper, augment my wrongs, and make me more ſelf-odious! " I began with this," ſaid Lindorf, giving it to the Count.

" Mademoiſelle de Manteul firſt aſked a " thouſand pardons of her brother for hav- " ing given him falſe hopes. Deceived her- " ſelf, ſhe had believed the thing ſhe

" wiſhed to be was true, and that he had
" been the ſecret object of Matilda's love. It
" was your letter," added ſhe, " that very
" letter I requeſted you to write, and from
" which I expected effects ſo very differ-
" ent, that deſtroyed all my hopes. No,
" brother, you are not the beloved man.
" Matilda has long ſince yielded her heart.
" She refuſes the homage of de Zaſtrow,
" of you, and of the whole world, for the
" ſake of your new friend, that very Ba-
" ron of Lindorf of whom you ſpeak. She
" ſaw but his name in your letter and, in-
" ſtantly, her ſecret was betrayed: yet it
" can now be no ſecret to you, for, being
" thus intimate with that gentleman, he,
" by this, has, certainly, made you his con-
" fidant; certainly, has told you he has
" long ſince been contracted to the young
" Counteſs of Walſtein. Her brother, the
" moſt

" moſt intimate friend of Lindorf, pro-
" moted this union, and their hearts were
" accordant to his wiſhes. Matilda declares
" nothing can diſſolve this contract but
" death; for, though Lindorf ſhould even
" prove inconſtant, ſhe never will. Your
" paſſion, therefore, dear brother, for your
" own ſake, you will vanquiſh, and I think
" I know you to be ſufficiently reaſonable
" and generous to reſt aſſured it will change
" to friendſhip, and that you will take a
" pleaſure at once to ſerve Matilda and her
" lover. This you may do by giving him
" the incloſed letter, which the poor young
" lady had no means of ſending. It is not
" ſhe that requeſts this, but I; thinking
" it the beſt means of effecting your cure.
" Tell this Lover that his miſtreſs is per-
" ſecuted by her aunt, who will oblige her
" to wed de Zaſtrow, whom ſhe hates; that

"this will certainly occaſion her death; "prevail on him to depart inſtantly, that "he may conſole, deliver, and carry her "off, if neceſſary; and, indeed, I ſee no "other means. What can he have to fear, "ſince he is authorized by her brother? "You well may ſuppoſe, Charles, I ſhould "have been happy had you been the man; "but her heart was beſtowed before ſhe "came to Dreſden. Endeavour, there- "fore, only to contribute to her happineſs; "and, perhaps, to your ſiſter's likewiſe."

This latter phraſe, which had eſcaped the obſervation of Lindorf, made the Count ſmile, and confirmed him in his former opinion of Mademoiſelle de Manteul. He returned the letter to Lindorf, who then gave him that from Matilda—"Read," ſaid he, "and think what muſt have been the impreſſion it made on me!"

"Dreſden—

" Dreſden———Yes, M. Lindorf, Ma-
" tilda writes to you. Your friend, Ma-
" tilda. She does very wrong, to be ſure;
" ſhe ought not to be the firſt to break this
" excellent ſilence. Oh! yes, yes; I know
" I do wrong; but, I likewiſe know, I can-
" not help it. There are certain moments
" in life when the heart ſpeaks louder than
" reaſon, and compels it to ſilence, and
" my heart ſays ſo many many things that
" I am obliged to liſten and do whatever
" it pleaſes. It tells me, for example, I
" ſhall be leſs unhappy when I have relat-
" ed all my ſufferings to my friend; and I
" already feel it tells me truth. Since I
" have begun to write it ſeems as if my
" griefs were all changed into ſo many
" pleaſures; but, alas! theſe will preſently
" vaniſh; and no ſooner will my letter be
" ended than my torments will re-com-

" mence. My brother ſtill in Ruſſia, Lin-
" dorf ſtill in England, de Zaſtrow ſtill at
" Dreſden, and poor Matilda ſtill perſe-
" cuted——My aunt requires impoſſibi-
" lities. Have I two hearts that I may
" beſtow one on de Zaſtrow? And if I had
" a thouſand, ſhould not I give them all
" to—— to——. Ever ſince I have begun
" to write this letter, nay, ever ſince I firſt
" thought of writing it, have I been in-
" ceſſantly torturing my imagination for
" the beſt manner of telling you what I
" feel, and how I might ſay all I have to
" ſay; but the more I think the leſs I ſuc-
" ceed. It will be impoſſible you ſhould
" underſtand me—— I will think no more
" on the matter; I will ſuffer my hand and
" my heart to go their own way. I re-
" quire ſincerity, and have a right to give
" the example——Yes, M. Lindorf (ſee!

" ſee!

" ſee! I am ſtill thinking about the man-
" ner). Well then, dear, dear Lindorf! I
" love you, and ſhall love you as long as I
" live!—And, be aſſured, I will live and
" die either Matilda Walſtein or Matilda
" Lindorf.——Do not be terrified at this
" my eternal conſtancy. No, dear Lin-
" dorf, it does not entail itſelf on *you*:
" far am I from ſuppoſing you under the
" ſame obligation. With myſelf only, not
" with you, have I entered into this en-
" gagement. I have heard men may
" change as often as they pleaſe, without
" becoming leſs eſtimable in their own
" eyes, or even in the eyes of the women;
" and it muſt be true, ſince my brother, the
" wiſeſt and the beſt of men, has changed,
" nobody knows why, and ſeems no longer
" to love his poor ſiſter.——Ah! Lindorf,
" dear Lindorf, do you ſupply the place

" of this brother, who forſakes me; he is
" ſo far off I have no means of reclaiming
" his friendſhip; but, certainly, yours,
" Lindorf, will come to my aid. Adviſe,
" tell me, how I may avoid a marriage I
" deteſt; preſerve me for——Alas! if not
" for Lindorf, for myſelf.——If it be true
" he loves another——I aſk no queſtions,
" I ſhall know it ſoon enough; yet it will
" not alter my preſent manner of thinking,
" neither with reſpect to you, the Baron de
" Zaſtrow, nor all the men on earth, for
" never among them all will I chuſe more
" than one. This I know, and what far-
" ther knowledge do I want? Only tell me
" you will remain the friend of Matilda;
" the word *friend* will aſcertain your ſince-
" rity; which will be ſtill farther confirmed
" by your frankneſs, and eagerneſs to an-
" ſwer this, to relieve me from the cruel in-
" quietude your ſilence, that of my bro-

" ther,

"ther, and the abſence of you both occa-
"ſion; from that neglect which reſembles
"offence, forgetfulneſs, and death, and
"which certainly will be death, if it con-
"tinue much longer, to Matilda Wal-
"ſtein.

"P. S. I know not how to direct this
"letter, nor where to ſend it. Alas! I
"know not whether you or my brother
"neglect me the moſt; but you both
"are ——— What in the world I love the
"beſt! Which, I am afraid, is as much as
"to ſay, ungrateful."

The Count was affected at reading this letter, and ſeverely reprehended himſelf for having ſuffered his paſſion for Caroline to make him ſo far forget his ſiſter. He ought not to have been ſatisfied with writing a letter; he ſhould have ſuppoſed it might be intercepted, and have gone himſelf.

ſelf. He began to imagine he, only, was in the wrong.——"You may think," ſaid Lindorf, "what I felt from what you yourſelf feel."—The Count was going to give back the letter.——"No, keep it," ſaid Lindorf, "and, if ever I ſhould be wretched enough to forget it, or give my Matilda a moment's grief, ſhew me but that letter again and I ſhall inſtantly repair the wrong."

"I did not heſitate a moment, after I had read it," continued he, "concerning how I muſt act. To fly to her, to conſole her, to intreat her to forgive the injuries I had done her; to tear her from the arms of tyranny, and dedicate my life to her happineſs, was the firſt wiſh, the vow, of my heart. I clearly ſaw they deceived her, ſince ſhe ſtill ſuppoſed you in Ruſſia. They, no doubt, had intercepted your letters; ſhe was beſet

with ſnares, and by people devoted to de Zaſtrow. The danger was ſo preſſing that I determined immediately to depart; the recollection of Manteul only could have prevented me, and this his note counteracted. *Could any thing diſturb, or alter, my eſteem and friendſhip for you it would be to hear you were in London at this time to-morrow.* I determined, however, not to leave England till I had removed every doubt reſpecting my own conduct, and the myſtery I had made of my engagements with Matilda. I, therefore, ſat down and wrote a circumſtantial account of what my motives and intentions were, in which I concealed nothing but the name of Caroline, and owned that what he had ſaid of Matilda had more than revived my former inclination for her; but that, feeling ſhe had every right to forget me, I had reſolved

to

to make her every reparation I might, by aiding her in this her ſuppoſed new paſſion. My letter was long, and I was ſtill writing when the ſervant, whom Manteul had taken with him, returned. He, on recollection, had ſent him back with another note, which was but a ſort of repetition of the preceding one, fearing leſt it had not come to hand, and that my departure was by that means deferred. He added new and ſtronger motives to haſten me, and, that I might not have the leaſt uneaſineſs on his account, aſſured me, "He looked "on it as a lucky event. Too young, at "preſent, to marry (he is not twenty) no "woman but Matilda could have excuſed "his entering into the marriage ſtate. The "ſuſpicion of being beloved by her had "led him wild, but the conviction of the "contrary had reſtored him to reaſon and "liberty. By theſe he would profit, would "ſtudy,

"ſtudy, and travel for ſome years, and "hoped, when we met again, to find me "the happy huſband of the moſt lovely of "women. Whatever my reaſons might "have been for forſaking her, he was cer- "tain I no longer ſhould be inconſtant the "moment I ſaw her. He knew me too "well to believe I ſhould not immediately "fly to her aſſiſtance, though it were but "from motives of friendſhip, and if I even "were incapable of love. He concluded "by telling me his ſervant had orders to "return to him as ſoon as he had ſeen me "get into the poſt-chaiſe."

"I ſent back the voluminous letter I had written, and his ſervant departed for Newmarket, at the ſame time that I left London. The wind was favourable, and we had a quick paſſage. I found Varner at Hamburg, where he had been ſeveral weeks,

weeks, detained by contrary winds, and at which he had been much afflicted. He gave me your ſhort note, and my banker, the ſame day, delivered the ſucceeding letter; both were equally preſſing, both requeſted my immediate return, without explaining your motives. Of this there was no need; the requeſt of Walſtein need not fear diſobedience, and, had I not been returning, I inſtantly ſhould have ſet out. Yet how muſt I confeſs that my heart made me take the road to Dreſden inſtead of that to Berlin! I have no excuſe unleſs it were a *preſentiment*. I endeavoured to perſuade myſelf that a few days delay could not give you any pain, though it might be of the utmoſt conſequence to Matilda. I was anxious to ſee her, to perſuade her to come with me, and bring her to her brother. Nay, I even interpreted your two ſo preſ-

ſing

fing letters into poſitive orders that related ſolely to Matilda, and concluded I beſt was anſwering your intentions by flying to her aid before I ſaw you. I therefore ſtopped only at Hamburg till good horſes and equipage could be found. The reſt you know; my rencontre with de Zaſtrow, and my ſurpriſe at ſeeing Matilda leap out of the poſt-chaiſe. Though I have not yet ventured to tell you, before her, how much the alteration in her perſon affected, aſtoniſhed, and enchanted me; how ſuperior ſhe was to the Matilda I had formerly known, to her Manteul had deſcribed, or, even, to what my imagination had ſuppoſed. Oh! Walſtein, how beauteous! how angelic did ſhe ſeem, embelliſhed as her countenance was by the emotions of her heart! The firſt words ſhe uttered had ſomething of tenderneſs, of feeling, of ſoul, which it is im-

poſſible

poſſible to convey. I ſee her now fly from the carriage, run with open arms, and hear her utter, "Lindorf, dear Lindorf, they want to ſteal your Matilda from you, who is, and only will be, yours!"

"Her native innocence is above all ſuſpicion; ſhe loves, herſelf, and thinks it moſt certain ſhe is, herſelf, beloved. Not a year's ſilence, not all that others have ſaid, nor all that I have done, could ſhake her conſtancy. The moment ſhe ſees me they are all forgotten, and not a ſhadow of doubt remains. Ah! when fainting and feeble ſhe ſunk into my arms, pale, inanimate, and with half cloſed eyes, how intereſting was it to my ſoul! With what ardour did I ſwear to live for her, and her alone! On her lips, as I bore her into the houſe, I pronounced the vow which I never can forget, no more than I can the rapturous ſenſations I that moment experienced.

"My

" My affair with de Zaſtrow, my wound, e tender care ſhe has taken of me, her derſtanding, her grace, her ingenuous ind, all have augmented my paſſion. :t will I own I felt ſome emotion at the ht of Caroline; but it was of a very fferent kind from what I had formerly own. I ſaw with pleaſure, yes, Wal-:in, with infinite pleaſure, you were be-ved, and Caroline was to me as a ſiſter, e wife of my friend and brother. And w, dear Count, you know my inmoſt art, and, I hope, will not delay to be-w the happineſs I ſo ardently deſire, hich preſent conviction tells me I deſerve, d which will make felicity perfect."

" My felicity," replied the Count, ten-rly embracing him, " will not be perfect l I behold Matilda and Lindorf as happy I myſelf am; nor ſhall it be long be-

fore

fore theſe new bonds of affinity and friendſhip ſhall be formed, which will leave me nothing farther to wiſh."

Walſtein, then, related all his paſt ſcenes with Caroline. Lindorf ſhuddered at the idea of the divorce. "Good God!" ſaid he, "could you ſuppoſe I would be acceſſary to ſuch a ſacrifice! That I would be happy at the expence of Walſtein!"

"It was the happineſs of Caroline that was in conteſt, and neither thou nor I, Lindorf, ought then to recede. The letters I wrote, and which thou wouldeſt have found on thy arrival, would have removed every ſcruple: friendſhip and delicacy muſt have yielded to motives more deciſive. My reaſons were good, and my meaſures well taken, and thou couldeſt not but have acted accordingly."

"Aſk me not how I ſhould have acted," replied

replied Lindorf; "I, fortunately, have not been put to the proof. I am proud of being your brother. You only could deſerve Caroline, and ſhe alone could equal your virtues. Matilda, perhaps, is, by temper and nature, better ſuited to your friend Lindorf."

"She does not know," ſaid the Count, "that Caroline has been her rival?" "She knows every thing," replied Lindorf, with vivacity. "She has a right to know every thing. My heart were unworthy of her had I any ſecrets. In juſtice, I was obliged to account for my coolneſs, my ſilence, my voyage to England. Might I deceive her? No, impoſſible; and, had I even ſo intended, no ſuch intention could have been kept. Her noble frankneſs, her open candour, would irreſiſtibly have enſured like confidence and like ſincerity. No ſooner

were

were we alone in the poſt-chaiſe than ſhe ſpoke of you and your marriage; and aſked if I knew her ſiſter. A full confeſſion of all that had paſſed was my anſwer; and, far from feeling jealouſy or vexation, I found, as I ſpoke, ſhe became attached to Caroline, was deſirous of her friendſhip, and determined to imitate her beſt qualities and virtues. "Oh! how dearly," ſaid ſhe, "ſhall I love this charming Caroline! How happy will ſhe make my brother! And how gladly ſhall I learn, from her, to reclaim and fix my rover, my Lindorf!"—Since Matilda has ſeen her, ſhe has told me, with a tone of ſincerity that leaves no doubt on the mind, "Ah! Lindorf, how perfectly are you juſtified in your paſſion! I never could have pardoned you had you ſeen Caroline with indifference!" Such, dear Count, is

your

your ſiſter; and judge whether I ought not to adore her."

Arrived at Berlin, the firſt care of the Count was to preſent his friend and ſiſter to the King, and requeſt his approbation of their marriage; which obtained, the happy family went to the Walſtein eſtate, where Caroline had fled *from* her huſband, on the bridal day, and *to* him, on the morning of the projected divorce, and of which Juſtin was ſteward. There, in the Count's chapel, was the marriage celebrated, without other witneſſes than Walſtein, Caroline, the tenants of the Chateau, and ſome of the villagers. As they left the church, Louiſa came to pay her reſpects to Lindorf, to whom ſhe was preſented by Caroline. He beheld both theſe lovely women, who formerly had raiſed ſuch commotions in his breaſt, with perfect tranquillity; and, preſ-

ſing the hand of the Count who ſtood next him, "I feel, at this moment," ſaid he, "I am worthy to be the brother of Walſtein. I was diſtracted for Louiſa, Caroline I adored, but Matilda I love, and ſhall for ever love!"

The CONCLUSION.

To thoſe who wiſh to be informed of every thing that paſſes we ſhall further ſay, that Lindorf continued thus to think; that he made his lovely lady happy, attained to the higheſt rank in the army, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf on ſeveral occaſions. That Edmund, Count of Walſtein, was a pillar to the throne, a friend of the King, a protector of the people, a ſupporter of the wretched, and that he found, in the conſtant affection of his dear Caroline, and

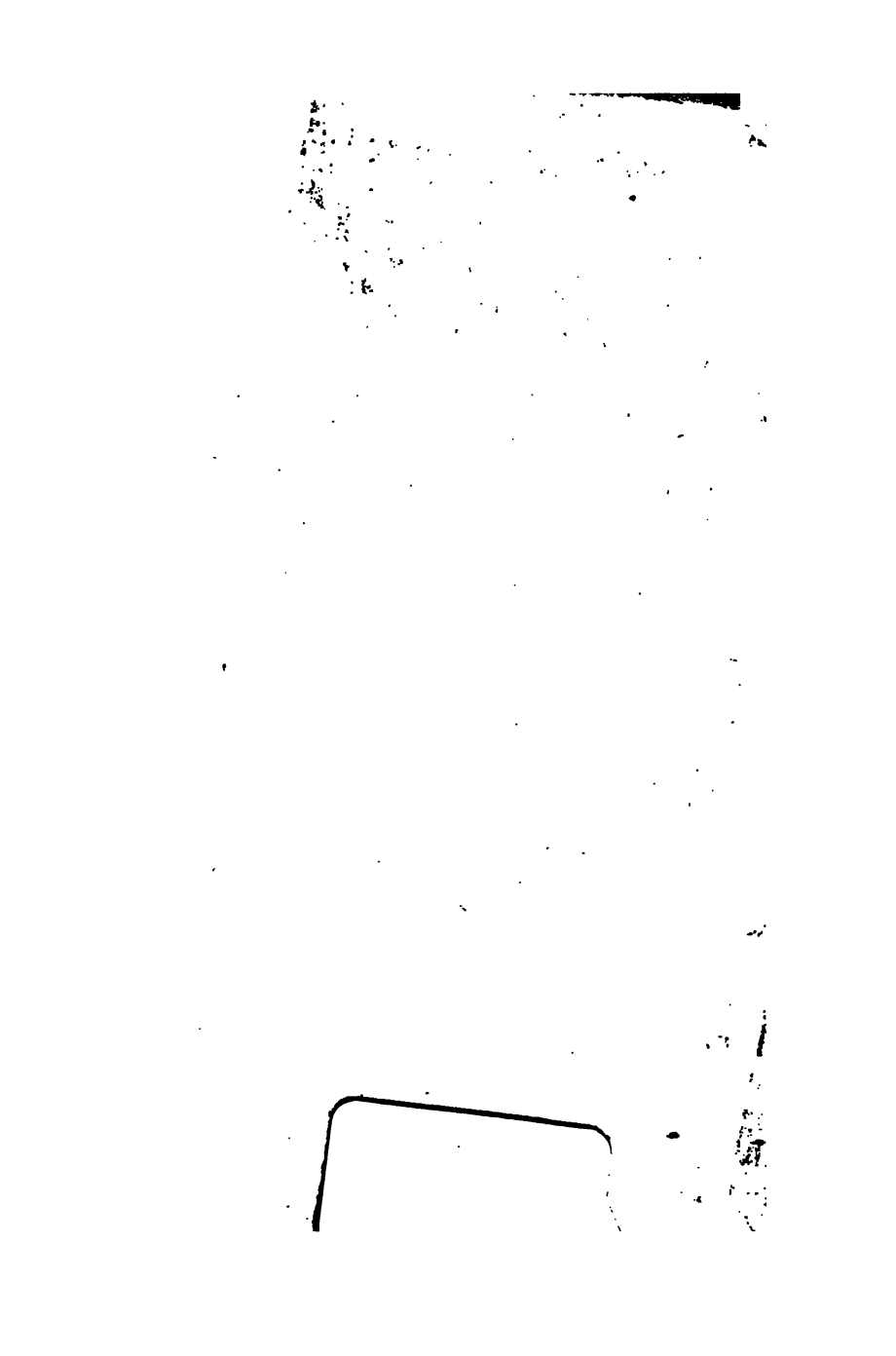
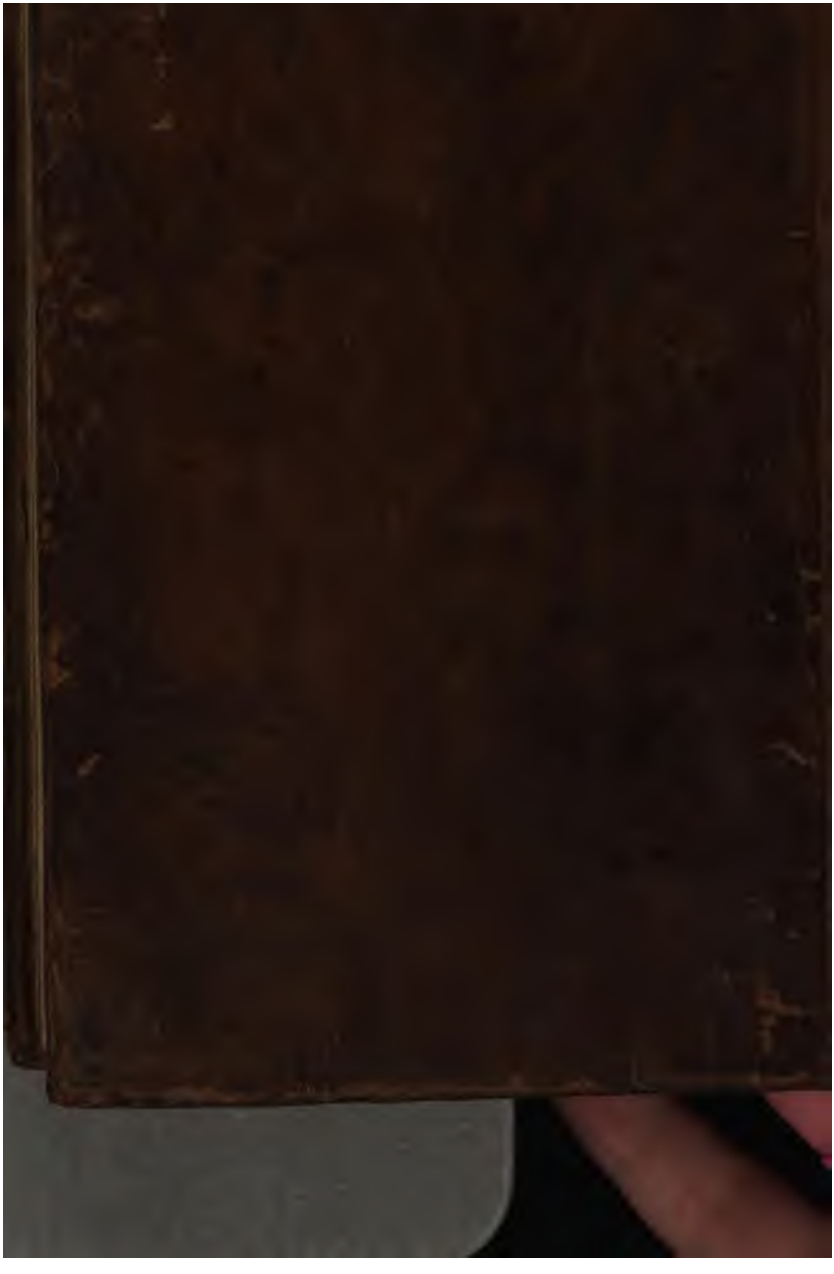
the good conduct of his children, the full recompenſe of his virtues; while Caroline, the adored, the beloved Caroline, meeting the admiration ſhe merited, was the happieſt as ſhe was the moſt angelic of women.

We ſhall likewiſe add that the young Baron de Zaſtrow, admiring his Pariſian graces, engrafted on a German trunk, finding he pleaſed only Mademoiſelle de Manteul, who pleaſed not him, returned to Paris and his gaming friends, purſued his theatrical conqueſts, and made ſuch good uſe of his time, money, and conſtitution that, in leſs than a year, he was ruined, diſeaſed, and dead. His aunt, perceiving Matilda had had good reaſon for her refuſal, pardoned, and left her all her wealth.

Mademoiſelle de Manteul retired, at firſt, into a convent; after which ſhe obtained the place of a Maid of Honour, at

court.

court; where, exerciſing that ſpirit of intrigue with which ſhe was ſo liberally endowed, ſhe became perfectly competent to her poſt.

Her young brother, the well diſpoſed and amiable Manteul, for whom we have been intereſted, and whom we ſaw ſet off to Newmarket, met with Lady Sophia Seymour, who was couſin german to the Count and Matilda, and who greatly reſembled the latter. Manteul now found he was far from having ſuffered a loſs, inaſmuch as Lady Sophia, no-wiſe inferior to her lovely couſin, loved him with all the ardour with which Matilda loved Lindorf. The Count, in a voyage he made to London, in company with Caroline, had the pleaſure of forming this union, and making two more lovers happy.

THE END.